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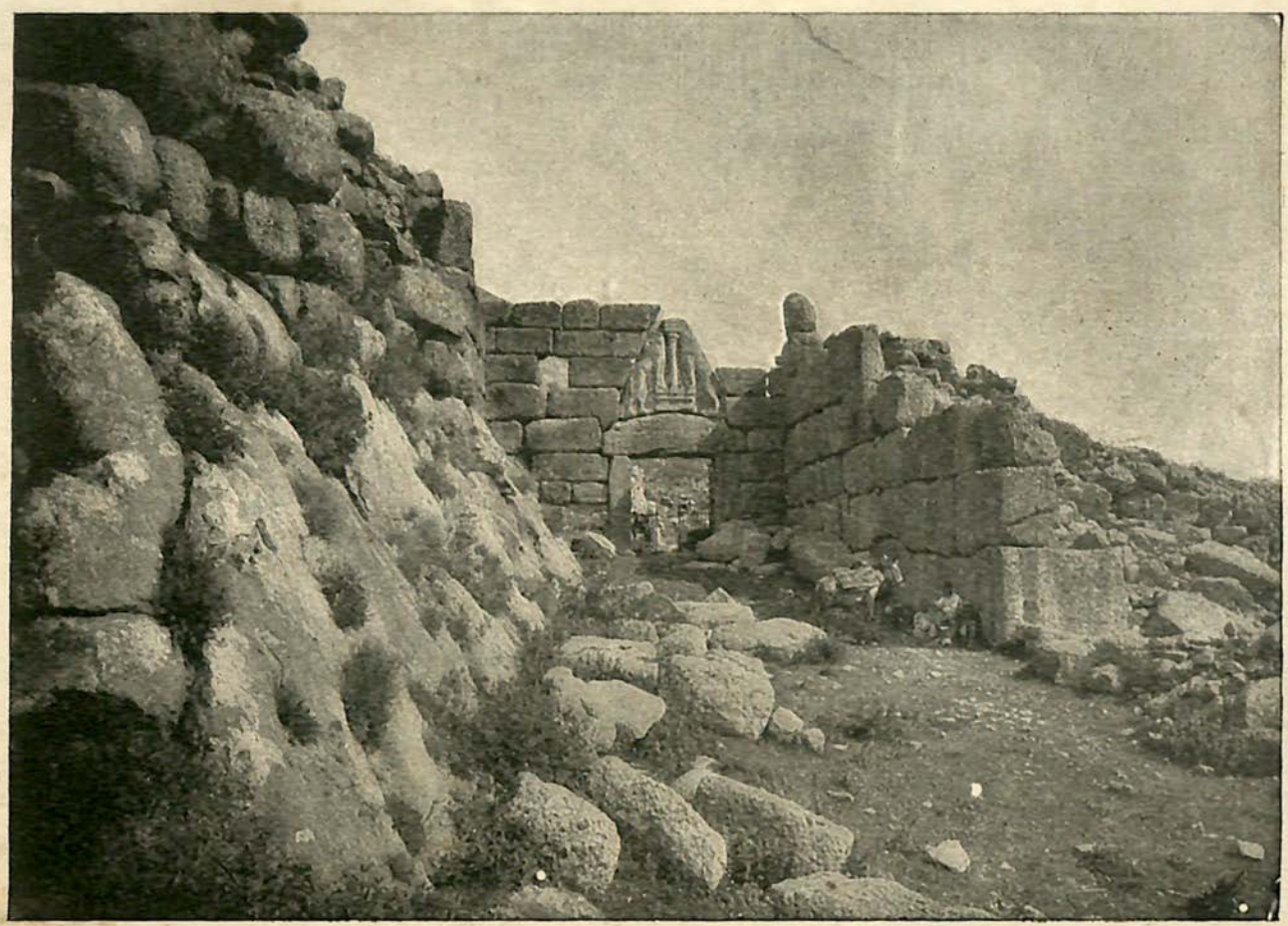
A SURVEY

OF

GREEK CIVILIZATION



LION GATE AT MYCENÆ. (See page 22.)

A SURVEY

OF

GREEK CIVILIZATION

63384

BY

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PREFACE.

THERE is, I think, a strong tendency in the present day to pursue the threads of knowledge separately. It is on the whole a wholesome tendency, though it sacrifices breadth and variety of acquisition to thoroughness in each department. A herd of specialists is rising up, each master of his own subject, but absolutely ignorant and careless of all that is going on around him in kindred studies. The man who has turned his mind to various pursuits, and has endeavoured to embrace in his view many fields of research, is even looked upon with suspicion, instead of respect, and presumed to be inaccurate in each of the particular fields which occupy so many special students exclusively.

I fear that this separation is being carried out beyond its legitimate or useful degree even in the separation of secular and religious subjects, of intellectual and moral studies. To take the most signal example: In the Roman Catholic Church it is an avowed principle that theology is the only necessary science for the education of a priest, that this theology, far from being enlightened, is likely to be endangered by secular knowledge. On the other hand, the scientist generally stands aloof from theology, and too often expresses his contempt for it as a non-progressive science, or if he be of a better moral fibre, and acknowledges the weight and importance of religion, he is ready to accept, as a mere layman, what his pastor or other clerical adviser may teach.

The result is a loss of breadth on the theological side,

a loss of seriousness (in the moral sense) on the scientific side. In both there is the increasing tendency to thrust aside or forget the great unifying principle of all our life and knowledge — that all our thought, all our science, all our history, all our speculation of every kind, nay, even all the vast complex of worlds in which myriads of other beings may be prosecuting similar inquiries—these are the product or the outcome of the design of one Almighty God, who has created the world according to his infinite wisdom, and rules it according to his infinite goodness. A recognition of this great fact on our part is the proper link or common ground of all the various and minute special researches we may make into the laws of the universe, or the history of any part of it. Nay, more, it is the proper defence, the only defence we can make, if we are checked by the warning that in the few years vouchsafed to us on this earth we have no right to spend one moment of our precious time upon things of no eternal import; that the study of religion and our future condition under the providence of God is our only proper employment. We can reply in the most thorough earnest that the exclusive study of what we have separated and called moral or religious science is not the best way to promote that very science. The most remarkable illustrations, the most powerful vindications of God's providence, are found in probing the secrets of the laws of nature, the varieties in the course of human history. Here we may see working in practice what we learn from our theology in theory, and if in our feebleness and blindness we are unable to accommodate all the phenomena of science or of history to these laws, surely the worst way out of the difficulty is to ignore it, to shut our eyes to the facts, instead of using them to correct or enlarge our theory.

It is for these reasons that what may be called the Chautauqua idea of starting from the knowledge and love of God as a great first principle, and passing from it into the broadest and most various survey of human knowledge as such, is not only the highest, but the only true method of general education. But it is part and parcel of this method that the student need not perpetually be reminded of it. He must have his hours of special and absorbing study when he is engrossed in the special branch he has in hand, and when he need not, and cannot, be constantly dwelling upon the great idea which underlies all his life and work. Just as a diligent man of business, whose faith and trust in God are strong and clear, must nevertheless plunge into daily affairs and do worldly work which absorbs him for hours in the day, while the thought of God retires into the depths of his soul—the silent influence which, without being constantly recalled into consciousness, nevertheless orders his thoughts and protects him from temptations to fraud or selfishness—so the student of this history or any other branch of knowledge ought to pursue it with all his heart and search it out as such, secure if he reverts to the first basis of all knowledge and concludes that all the phenomena he has examined are instances of laws established by the great Creator of the world. For the God revealed to us is no oriental despot, who is content to see his slaves perpetually occupied in watching and praising their master, thus neglecting all other duties. He has rather set them to gain more knowledge with the talents intrusted to them, to push their way into the secrets of his wisdom with all the diligence, all the accuracy, all the devotion to this work of which they are capable ; and if such a servant, intent upon his lawful work, fails to look up and

see that the Master is present, may not such a fault be pardoned by him who has ordained that labour is honourable and zeal a moral duty? "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

These considerations justify a very common feeling among literary men, who do not regard the question before us so seriously. Even in works of fiction, they say, it is a defect and an injury to the intentions of the teacher if his moral be drawn too plainly; if he not only shows his characters and their adventures to the reader, but also tells him what lessons that reader is expected to draw from the narrative. The greatest moral teachers even in fiction are those who give us the truest and most striking pictures of human life and have left all moral inferences to work their own way with the reader. Such is the subtle but powerful teaching in Æschylus, Shakespeare, Scott, in fiction, and in true history there is no more signal example than the Gospel narratives of our Lord's passion, where not a single reflection or advice from the writer mars the dignity and the pathos of the narrative.

The same great principle may be applied in smaller and less important work. It is on the whole better for me to draw a picture of Greek civilization as it was, and as it aspired to be, without laying stress, during our progress, on the contrasts of the culture of intellect without moral forces to balance it, to that which has received the powerful support of Christianity. It is not easy even to guess what changes this great moral force would have made in Greek culture had it been applied during its most brilliant days. Christianity has hitherto been powerless to affect some brilliant societies, though it has worked a great reformation in the world. The Italian states in the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth

centuries were torn by all the vices and crimes which Thucydides describes as rife in the warring Greek republics. Machiavelli's idea of politics seems to have advanced in no way upon Aristotle's, from a moral point of view. Nay, even in the present day, on the very skirts of civilization and in countries once endowed with humanity and culture, there are atrocities committed such as we might only expect from the savages of Central Africa. In the very centre, in the very forefront of civilization do we not see greed, ambition, international jealousy urging neighbour nations to cast aside every moral, every Christian consideration, and to draw the sword in support of national objects, which every honest man in either nation would disavow as base and unworthy in any private transaction? So far one might be tempted to say that the teaching of Christianity has made, alas! but little difference.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that, in this century at least, there is a moderation in the practice of war among Christian nations, which did not exist in old Greek days. Not that there were then wanting men quite modern in their humanity; but the average has been raised; the opinion of the majority, of common men and women, is more humane since the preaching of the Gospel. On the other hand, it is quite possible that an earlier diffusion of Christianity might have stopped the great artistic development which has left so many permanent traces upon our life. Polytheism, with Greeks living under it, produced far finer results in art than Christianity, with Italians striving to glorify it on canvas and in stone. At all events, we should never have learned what was possible for the human intellect apart from revelation, and what flaws and faults adhere to the highest manifestations of that intellect, had we not be-

fore us the example of both the greatness and the smallness of Greek civilization.

But it is indeed an idle speculation to consider what would or would not have happened had God ordered the world's history otherwise than he has done. One weighty utterance is sufficient for us : "*When the fulness of time was come* God sent forth His Son." If, therefore, the world required preparation for that cardinal turning point, if a certain condition of ripeness was required for the proper acceptance of the Gospel by man, then the history which I have written in this volume is probably a most vital and important step in that preparation, perhaps hardly less important than that Law "which was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." For that Law affected only the chosen people, whereas Hellenic culture affected the world.

The reader will find this topic discussed in my final chapter, so that I need not enlarge upon it here. It is enough to remind him that he is not about to study a work of mere secular import, and only of use or interest to a worldly man ; the whole of these rich and varied antecedents to the establishment of that Christian culture which is the highest ideal we possess of life upon this earth are well worth the study of every intelligent man and woman. To such it is not only a privilege, but a duty, "to search all things, to try all things," in order that they may "hold fast that which is good."

Trinity College, Dublin,
March, 1896.

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A SURVEY OF GREEK CIVILIZATION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Italian revival of interest in Greek civilization.

IT were quite idle now, in the closing nineteenth century, to waste many words in setting forth the importance or interest of Greek history and civilization. Since the days when Lascaris and his fellows brought from Constantinople Greek books and Greek tastes, the remnant of the sack of the Turks, fugitive and needy, was the seed which grew up in one generation's sowing into the magnificent early Renaissance of Italy. It seduced popes from their piety, princes from their politics, and again made letters and art one of the first considerations of civilized men. Raphael and Michael Angelo steeped themselves in Greek art; they searched for it with eagerness under the ruins of Roman palaces, and copied it with the faithfulness of genius. The builders of the matchless Certosa (near Pavia) almost make us condone the ruffian Visconti's vices; the solemn art of Borgognone seems almost incompatible with the crimes of his patron. Then comes Machiavelli with his reflex of Aristotle's intricacies in politics, Cellini with his revival of the Alexandrian toreutic, not to speak of the new creation of literary style by the long-forgotten masterpieces of Plato, Isocrates, and Demosthenes.

Art.

Politics.

Letters.

All these things are now commonplace, but what never can be commonplace is to contemplate the permanence of this revival. Waxing indeed and waning,

Modern appreciation of the Greek genius.

misunderstood and travestied by the builders, the sculptors, and the poets, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was reserved for us in the nineteenth to turn from the muddy stream and seek again at the pure source the real freshness and glory of what the Greeks had produced. And so in our day we have not only laid aside the patch and powder with which our grandfathers had thought to improve the natural complexion of Greek art, we have even advanced to new discoveries in analyzing the subtleties of Greek genius. The builders of the Madeleine in Paris thought it a simple thing to copy the Parthenon. It was reserved for the marvellous investigations of M. Penrose* to show us that these builders had not the smallest inkling of the recondite art by which Ictinus designed his masterpiece. In like manner, it was not till yesterday that the art of Demosthenes, the artifices of Theocritus and his fellows, received their proper appreciation. It was not till the immortal work of Grote that we came to understand how Greek politics are not like the politics of mediæval Europe—the cunning of the priest, the violence of the baron, the cunning violence of the king—but in theory at least the reasonable discussion of the public, the final decision of the majority, the submission of magistrates and rulers to the will of the sovereign people. Modern inquiry has sought out along many paths the myriad developments of Greek intellect, and there is a great library of special researches in every European language recording the results. To gather up the sum of these researches into one broad view, within the limits of one volume, is indeed a task of great fascination, but is due rather to the publishers'

No feudalism in Greek political life.

Difficulty of giving a general presentation.

* In his "Principles of Athenian Architecture," written for the Society of Dilettanti.

boldness than to the author's ambition. In such a task any man may fail. No one has a right to attempt it who cannot conscientiously say that he has lived the long summer of his life in daily contact with all in turn of the many remains still extant of Greek art, politics, letters, life, speculation. Such an one may even come to regard it as an act of duty, in the autumn of his days, to stand like Homer's royal husbandman at the head of the furrows, resting on his staff, surveying with great contentment the rich harvest gathered by a host of willing toilers.

> "With sweeping stroke the mowers strew the lands;
> The gatherers follow and collect in bands.
> The rustic monarch of the field descries,
> With thankful glee, the heaps around him rise."

Beginnings of Greek civilization; date uncertain.

Our own generation has seen a great revolution of opinion regarding the epoch when the earliest civilized life in Greece began. It used to be perfectly agreed upon that Homer gave us the earliest picture. In him certainly do we find all those distinctive excellencies which are only found in Greek life and in Greek letters. There was no subsequent generation of Greeks which did not find Homer congenial, Homer natural, Homer ancestral. The society which he described was indeed in many respects different from the societies of historical days; but Grote and others took pains to show that the changes arose from natural development; that the agora of free men and the voice of public opinion* were already known and felt. Though Agamemnon asserted in a line known to Aristotle, but since expunged by offended editors, that he had the power of life and death, his sovereignty was evidently not absolute but, according to Thucydides's words, an hereditary

Homeric monarchy not absolute.

* Described as "some one said," when citing a general feeling.

monarchy with defined privileges.* Accordingly both ancients and moderns were agreed to accept Homer as the commencement of Greek history.

Date of Homer.

But what age does this imply? It used to be the fashion to put back Homer to a very early date. The fall of Troy was set down according to the chronology of Eratosthenes—the highest Greek authority—at 1104 B. C., and Homer was supposed to have been not far removed in date from this event, for did he not know all about it perfectly, and had he not a living conception of all the heroes before him? Besides, the whole Homeric society went to pieces in consequence of the war, and had not the poet lived close to the time, all the intimate knowledge he shows would have been lost or dissipated into fragments all over Greece. We may add that the whole society described in the poems differs so considerably from the earliest historical Greeks shown us in the poems of Archilochus and the elder Simonides, that a long gap must have intervened between the days of Agamemnon and the days of Gyges the Lydian, with his Greek friends the lyric poets.

Early Greek history formerly taken from Homer.

It used therefore to be maintained that we had at least a semi-historical knowledge of Greek society and Greek manners as far back as 1000 B. C. in the Iliad and Odyssey. All the earlier histories, even down to Thirlwall's and Grote's, began by giving a picture of Homeric society from this point of view. Grote also gave an explicit account of the mythology of the people, all the histories and adventures of their gods, as evidence of what the beliefs of the nation were, and what their notions of things spiritual and things unseen. He refused, indeed, to allow any historical value to these stories. He would not even admit that we had in them

* This is the description given by Aristotle in his "Politics."

a distorted account of early physical facts. If there were physical or historical facts there, no man could separate them from the fictions which surrounded them. They were therefore merely evidences of the people's imagination. He might very well have added, what he did not appreciate, that even the stories as we have them are made up by later and artificial processes, and by later and theoretical writers, who strove to harmonize legends which were various and inconsistent in the hearts of the isolated communities that made up the Hellenic nation.

Herodotus knew this so well that he asserted Homer and Hesiod to be the originators of the theology of the nation. They harmonized the legends, fixed the names and attributes of the gods, and made some sort of system out of the scattered beliefs of the people. But it need hardly be stated that theology only as old as Homer and Hesiod was no primitive faith, and could give us no picture of really ancient Greece. Most of our legends come from sources far later even than these.

Homer as a theologist.

And as regards what Homer and Hesiod had to say, were they really as old as they had been represented? Had they really any direct or close knowledge of the society of the tenth century before Christ? The general drift of modern criticism has led us to deny to them this position; nay, even as regards Homer, we have come to deny the unity of authorship of the Iliad and Odyssey; we have even come to deny the unity of authorship of the Iliad, and see in both poems the work of a school or succession of bards, enlarging, expanding, adorning a nucleus originally short and simple, and so gradually producing, under the heads of some master-arranger, at the close of a long development, these two great poems, whose unity is only artistic. For in the Iliad especially, as can easily be shown, inconsistencies

Homer and Hesiod no longer taken as historical.

Iliad not by a single author.

Traces of combination of earlier and later lays.

are frequent, sutures obvious, and the traces of older and shorter lays worked into a plot are not to be mistaken.

It follows at once that some parts at least of the Homeric poems are the work of later hands, who had no living knowledge even of the society which produced the earliest and simplest lays. These later bards may have written as antiquarians, drawing upon their imaginations for their facts. They did not live at any very remote age, for they must have known and used writing in the composition of these long, elaborate epics; and they show not a few signs of artificiality. Thus modern criticism has reduced the historical significance of the Homeric poems even below the sceptical position adopted by Grote. There arose also a school of thinkers in Germany, of whom Professor Max Müller was the most eminent representative in England, who were led by their speculations on comparative mythology to deny any historical basis whatever to the story of the siege of Troy, or the adventures of Ulysses. The human tragedies ascribed to the heroes were only travesties or misunderstandings of something far older and more universal, the phenomena of day and night, of the rising and setting sun, or of tempest and clear weather. Though this theory is now out of favour, it can hardly be said to be yet extinct, so I may here quote the words in which I criticised it more than twenty years ago, when it threatened, like the rod of Aaron, to swallow up the rods of the other magicians with whom it came in conflict:

The sceptical school of Homeric critics.

Fanciful interpretation of mythology.

There is a fallacy, called by Archbishop Whately the *thaumatrope* fallacy, in which the illusion is produced by rapidly presenting to our minds a series of separate ideas, and ringing the changes on them till we are confused and believe

them all identical or connected. A logical reader is strongly reminded of this fallacy when he finds the sun, the dawn, the storm-clouds, and the gloaming, kept going like a number of balls in a juggler's hand. Any hero can play any part. If he is spoken well of he must be the sun, if not, he is the night. Whether he murders or marries or deserts a maiden or a widow, she is the dawn. What is still more unscientific, if he have two or three letters of his name identical with any other mythical name, identity of character is asserted. This is a habit which our comparative mythologers ought not to acquire, seeing that even the most advanced comparative mythologers of Germany cannot forget the difficulties before them. Even Professor Max Müller cannot develop his theory without much hesitation. Far from being satisfied with any random similarity, he professedly requires complete identity of letters, a knowledge of the etymology, and even an identity of accent, before he is satisfied. Thus, he hesitates about *Septemtriones.** He hesitates about Paris, as we have seen. He hesitates (though little) about Hermes, because the form *Heremeias* does not occur. He hesitates concerning *Aditi* having the meaning of the Infinite.†

Theory of identity of character.

We pass to the psychological argument, which bases the whole system of interpretation by the sun and dawn alone on an analysis of the mental condition of savages, or of primitive races; and I would draw special attention to this side of the theory, which has hitherto been very slightly examined by careful critics. Comparative mythologers draw very poetical and very detailed pictures of these historical infants, and give us to understand that they have studied their habits closely. "His mental condition‡ determined the character of his language, and that condition exhibits in him, as in children now, the working of a feeling which endows all outward things with a life not unlike his own. Of the several objects

Psychological interpretation of myths.

Personification by the primitive mind.

* "Lectures," II., page 365. Though, in matters of the kind, it is impossible to speak very positively, *it seems not improbable* that the name *triones* may be an old name for star in general.

† *Cf. ibid.*, II., 500, note. "*This is doubtful*, but I know no better etymology." The reader will find similar caution used in "Chips," II., page 133. I may add, however, that the greatest of Greek etymologists, G. Curtius, rejects many of the derivations which even M. Max Müller considers sound. So far are we still removed from the *judicial inquiry* stage.

‡ That is, of the primitive Aryan. The quotation is from Cox's "Aryan Mythology," I., pages 42 *sq.*

Primitive attitude to natural phenomena.

which met his eye he had no positive knowledge, whether of their origin, their nature, or their properties. But he had life, and therefore all things else must have life also. He was under no necessity of personifying them, for he had for himself no distinctions between consciousness and personality. He knew nothing of the conditions of his own life or of any other, and therefore all things on the earth or in the heavens were invested with the same vague idea of existence. The sun, the moon, the stars, the ground on which he trod, the clouds, storms, and lightnings were all living beings; could he help thinking that, like himself, they were conscious beings also? His very words would, by an inevitable necessity, express this conviction. His language would admit no single expression from which the attribute of life was excluded, while it would vary the forms of that life with unerring instinct. Every object would be a living reality, and every word a speaking picture.

Attributes life to every aspect of the material world.

For him there would be no bare recurrence of days and seasons, but each morning the dawn would drive her bright flocks to the blue pastures of heaven before the birth of the lord of day from the toiling womb of night. Round the living progress of the new-born sun there would be grouped a lavish imagery, expressive of the most intense sympathy with what we term the operation of material forces, and not less expressive of the utter absence of even the faintest knowledge. Life would be an alternation of joy and sorrow, of terror and relief; for every evening the dawn would return leading her bright flocks, and the short-lived sun would die. Years might pass, or ages, before his rising again would establish even the weakest analogy; but in the meanwhile man would mourn for his death, as for the loss of one who might never return. For every aspect of the material world he would have ready some life-giving expression; and those aspects would be scarcely less varied than his words. The same object would at different times, or under different conditions, awaken the most opposite or inconsistent conceptions. But these conceptions and the words which expressed them would exist side by side without producing the slightest consciousness of their incongruity; nor is it easy to determine the exact order in which they might arise. The sun would awaken both mournful and inspiriting

Imagery.

ideas, ideas of victory and defeat, of toil and premature death. He would be the Titan, strangling the serpents of the night

before he drove his chariot up the sky; and he would also be the being who, worn down by unwilling labour undergone for men, sinks wearied into the arms of the mother who bare him in the morning. Other images would not be wanting; the dawn and the dew and the violet clouds would be not less real and living than the sun. In his rising from the east he would quit the fair dawn, whom he should see no more till his labour drew toward its close. And not less would he love and be loved by the dew and by the morning herself, while to both his life would be fatal as his fiery car rose higher in the sky. So would man speak of all other things also; of the thunder and the earthquake and the storm, not less than of summer and winter."

Contrast with attitude of primitive man as we know him.

From what source is this picture drawn? Certainly not from an investigation of the tribes that still live in their primitive condition in remote quarters of the globe. These tribes, whether they roam in the prairies of North America or inhabit the forests of India, whether crushed in their development by the cold of Siberia or the heat of Africa, have many points in common, so many that patient inquirers are beginning to form some general idea of what all tribes or races must have been in their earliest condition.* We may safely assert that there are no cases at all parallel to the fancy picture of the mythologers. There are plenty of savages that worship the sun and moon, that personify moving objects, because they cannot conceive motion without life,† and that have formed myths about physical phenomena. But we look in vain for all this wonderful riot of imagination about the daily operations of nature, this terrible anguish about an ordinary sunset, this outburst of joy in the summer dawn, when their nightly grief had scarce lulled them to sleep.

Appeal to actual relics of civilization.

In this argument I had not perhaps given stress enough to the query which ought to be set to every such hypothesis to answer. Why were all the great

* If it be objected that these tribes belong to lower races, without answering the assumption of an original difference of race, it may fairly be retorted that there is no evidence of any higher intelligence in the original Aryans than in the present New Zealanders.

† So Schoolcraft says of the Red Indian *totem* (Vol. II., page 49). "It is always some animated object, and seldom or never derived from the inanimate class of nature." The widely spread worship of sacred stones appears to be symbolical, and not due to the attribution to them of life.

legends grouped about a few sites—Troy, Mycenæ, Tiryns? Were there no historical facts which made such a localization not only likely but necessary? It is very strange indeed that this very natural question was not answered by the learned who discussed the matter, as it ought to have been, by an appeal to the spade.

Lion Gate at Mycenæ.

The old Lion Gate at Mycenæ was long and well known, and it was quite plain that here at least was the seat of some ancient grandee, who should have left behind him some farther traces of his splendour. Could we identify him with Agamemnon who had ruled there according to the Iliad? What about Troy, the seat of Priam's wealthy kingdom? What about Tiryns and Orchomenus, both well-identified sites, both showing traces of massive and antique building? That learned men, discussing with zeal and even with passion the possibilities of the question, should never have condescended to adjourn their disputes till they had investigated the various sites to which the Iliad and Odyssey are attached by their authors, shows how men of books prefer victory in an argument to a conquest of new facts and a superseding of threadbare discussions by real discoveries. But at last "the time came, and the man."

Excavation should have preceded theory.

Prehistoric evidence not specially significant.

I need not delay here upon the evidences of human occupation of the Hellenic peninsula long before civilization. Flint arrow-heads and rude hand-made pottery are found all over Europe, and contain in them nothing distinctive of a race. There were even found under the lava of Santorin, a volcanic island in the Levant (beside the ancient Thera) engulfed houses, a sort of prehistoric Pompeii, with some skeletons, gold ornaments, axes, and other remains of primitive industry.* But these

Cf. Fouqué, "Santorin et ses éruptions" (Paris, 1879) or Busolt's (German) "History of Greece," Vol. I., page 51 *sq.* (2d edition, Gotha, 1893).

and the other flint remains of Greece are not to be compared in perfection with those discovered in the terramare of Reggio di Emilia in north Italy, and which the traveller now admires in the wonderful museum of the *Collegio Romano* at Rome. If we judged from mere flint-heads, the natives of northern Italy ought to have easily outstripped the natives of the Hellenic peninsula.

Schliemann's excavations of Homeric sites.

But these things need not here concern us. Let us turn to the momentous discoveries made by the late Dr. Schliemann on the sites of the cities marked out in the Homeric poems, as the capitals or strongholds of monarchs who controlled the people around them. Here we ought to find, not mere savage tools and ornaments, but the remains of the inventions and luxuries of a more developed society. Schliemann undertook much more than this. With the enthusiasm which seldom dwells in the heart of the thoroughly scientific investigator, he hoped to find the actual palace of Agamemnon, the actual scenery of the city of Troy, where Priam and Paris, Hector and Æneas, once stalked through the echoing streets. It seemed for a season that his wildest expectations were realized. He found at Hissarlik, which his intuitive genius told him to be the true site of Troy, the remains of a burnt palace, the weapons of primitive warfare, the jewels of queens, the worn querns of slaves. He found that layer after layer had been piled upon the chosen site, as if men could not tear themselves, in spite of the grim associations of fire and sword, from the long-settled spot, to which the temples of gods and the graves of ancestors bound them with invisible, but indissoluble fetters. His brilliant diagnosis revealed to recalcitrant pedants, not only that he had found the true site of the

Troy.

Hissarlik the site of Troy.

Historical basis for the Iliad.

renowned city, but that the Iliad of Homer had a distinct historical basis, apart from the superstructures of fancy. Even if Achilles was, as some fancied, the sun, and Helen the dawn, these primitive personifications had been attached to a distinct local habitation, and connected with a great conflict among real men.

Schliemann's discoveries at Mycenæ.

If these general conclusions required the confirmation of another instance, Schliemann supplied it by his second and more brilliant discovery at Mycenæ. Here again, on the alleged site of Homeric grandeur, he found the tombs of kings, the treasures of a rich monarchy, the colossal building of countless human hands. The Homeric epithets of *very-golden* Mycenæ and *much-fortified* Tiryns were confirmed by facts. Kings' palaces were discovered with no mean remnants of art, no mean control of the most massive materials. Here then was the palace of Agamemnon, king of men; from hence he set out with the combined forces of the Morea for the East. Thus again Homer seemed perfectly justified, and the Iliad, etc., assumed an aspect of freshness and reality, which it had lost amid the rude handling of the men of books. But those who had been trained to estimate evidence kept counselling caution, and a postponement of our decision upon these gigantic additions to our evidence. For while there were on the one hand enthusiasts, who accepted the whole discovery as a mere material confirmation of the Homeric story, so there were other far more silly people, fastidious sceptics, who would not believe that even the site of Homeric Troy had been discovered, and who ventured to affirm that the Mycenæan tombs were of mediæval construction. These fatuous judgments are now well-nigh forgotten, especially by the men who once held them, and the archaic character of the remains

Homer confirmed.

of both Troy and Mycenæ is as well established as is the certainty that at Hissarlik the Homeric poets knew of a fortified city, and that that city was wasted by a victorious enemy.

This historical sketch of the discovery is necessary before we approach the problems which it suggests, and which are the proper subject of this book. What evidence do the remains of Troy, Mycenæ, and Tiryns afford us of the life and civilization of their early inhabitants? If these are indeed the places celebrated in Homeric story, how do their contents agree with the data of the Homeric poems? Can we fit together the palace of Mycenæ, its walls, its treasures, its tombs, with the portrait of Agamemnon in the Iliad? Can we do the same in the case of Priam and our newly discovered Troy? If so we might indeed rewrite the first chapter of "Social Life in Greece," and fill up countless gaps left in our literary evidence from the materials supplied by the fortunate excavator.

Questions suggested by the excavations.

But the longer the evidence was examined, the more thoroughly it was sifted, the more clearly did we see the astounding conclusion coming out of the mist, that in Schliemann's Troy, his Mycenæ, in Homer's Iliad, in the Odyssey, we have four distinct strata of civilization — the first three separated from each other by long intervals of time and profound differences of character. Instead, therefore, of filling up our Homeric picture of Greek life, these discoveries reveal to us in hard facts what we had long since inferred from literary arguments,* that the society of the Iliad and the Odyssey was not a primitive society, but the waning phase of an older civilization, to which the poets looked back as a greater and stronger age; a time of retrospect and of

Evidence from excavations of Troy, Mycenæ, and Tiryns.

Schliemann's Troy not the actual Troy of Homer.

* *Cf.* my "Social Life in Greece," Chapters I. and II.

regret, tainted even with traces of that *Weltschmerz* which mars the simple faith of Herodotus, which embitters the scepticism of Euripides.

Inferiority of remains at Troy to those at Mycenæ.

From the very outset, all of us who examined dispassionately the remains of that layer of building which Schliemann called the Homeric city were astonished and disconcerted by two facts. In the first place, the fortified enclosure was so much smaller than what Homer had led us to expect, that it seemed rather a fortified palace and fort than a city with streets and a considerable population. Secondly, the pottery, weapons, walls, all appeared very rude and primitive for a place so rich and long settled as the city of Priam. Those who compared all that was said about Mycenæ with what was said about Troy in Homer, had inferred that the latter was the richer and the more luxurious, the outcome of longer growth and greater luxury. The remains told us a very different story. The pottery especially was much ruder at Hissarlik, most of it hand-made and not wheel-made, nor was there that advanced or peculiar finish which is now recognized in Mycenæan ware. A glance through the many specimens in Schliemann's "Ilios" and a comparison with those in his "Mycenæ" will make this obvious to the student. So far, then, the remains did not corroborate the Iliad. The whole aspect of the fort of Pergamum was older and ruder. Not every antiquarian has the courage of his convictions, and so the open assertion of this discrepancy was only made here and there by those of us who were not afraid or ashamed to retract a false move, or confess an error.

Latest excavations prove that Schliemann's Troy is older than Mycenæ.

Within the last two years, however, we have had the satisfaction of a brilliant corroboration from the later researches of Professor Dörpfeld. He has now made it quite plain that we were right in holding Schliemann's

Troy to be older and ruder than the ruins of Mycenæ and Tiryns. For outside the "second city" at Hissarlik, with a larger area and far more advanced construction, he has found the stratum of building which corresponds with the Greek palaces, and which held a similar and synchronous population. Above all, he has found here that Mycenæan pottery which is so distinctive a feature in the prehistoric remains of Argolis and the islands. Really rude and primitive pottery proves no affinity; all simple men in their first attempts at making vessels of clay follow the same process. Rudeness of this kind is not even by itself a clear proof of antiquity, for there is nothing more common than *neobarbarism*, or such want of development that men continue to make in the same fashion without alteration or improvement for myriads of years. When I was in Nubia in 1893 I used to buy from the native women baskets of Halfa grass not differing in one feature of material, design, or colour from the baskets we find in the tombs about the pyramids in Egypt, five thousand years old. But when we come to exceptional colour and distinctive pattern, the case alters immediately. The difference in pottery, therefore, between Schliemann's interior city and Dörpfeld's outer circle is in itself conclusive.

Primitive pottery not necessarily of significance.

Proof from difference of pottery in case of Troy.

The general result, however, disposes of the claim of Schliemann's city to any further place in this book. He had found not the town of Priam and the Iliad, or even of the age and development of Tiryns and Mycenæ, perhaps seven centuries anterior to Homer, but a far more antique and primitive fort, dating at the most moderate estimate not less than 2,500 years before the birth of Christ! To call such a city Greek, to assume that its inhabitants spoke or thought like Greeks, or even

Schliemann's Troy much older than the Iliad.

were the spiritual forefathers of Homer's Trojans, is beyond the demands to be made upon any reasonable imagination.* We may lay this piece of evidence aside, with one lesson, however, deeply engraved upon our minds. As civilization of some kind was vastly older upon the Hill of Troy than any of us had imagined, so the site of every historic city is likely to have been the habitation of countless generations. When once settled with local gods, and surrounded by the tombs of ancestors, it is not likely to have been abandoned in spite of siege and capture, of massacre and conflagration. A remnant of the population always escapes from such catastrophes and reoccupies the place, though the fire and blood-stained ruins must be levelled for new foundations. Thus we may assume that the great majority of cities in Greece and Asia Minor, which were celebrated in history, were built upon layers and layers of older débris, through which we may reach, in the case of hill fortresses, to the original rock. The civilization round the Ægean is therefore very old, older than any of us had suspected thirty years ago, and the sudden and marvellous bloom of Greek life came after millenniums of obscure and forgotten effort. Obscure and forgotten indeed, but not for that reason without its effect. For if the race was not changed, there grew up in these remote and unchronicled ages the habit of work, the sense of striving after higher ends, the longing for progress, which produced their secret effects upon future generations. This is the mystery of atavism.

Lesson to be learned from Schliemann's Trov.

Great antiquity of civilization round the Ægean Sea.

Importance of this for the generation that followed.

When we come to the remains of Mycenæ, we are nearer to our subject. No doubt there is at Troy a stratum yet to be examined more minutely, which will

Mycenæ.

*This is the sort of anachronism perpetrated by Professor Ebers in his popular novel "Uarda." He makes the Greek adventurers of the time of Ramses II. (1350 B. C.) as refined and advanced as the Greeks of the fifth century B. C.

correspond with what we shall now discuss. But as yet Dr. Dörpfeld has found too little to be of any use for our purpose. The reader will wonder how we can speak with any confidence about the manners of a society so little known, so little suspected till the revelations of Dr. Schliemann's spade. Let us take up the evidence of pottery. Look at the few specimens of painted vases in Schliemann's book. You will see at once the family likeness to the archaic pots found at Athens and other places dating from the sixth century before Christ. Not only are the costumes of the warriors analogous, but the drawing of the figures, the rude attempts to represent violent action, the utter ignorance and disregard of what we consider beauty of face and figure. Look again at the carved reliefs upon the sepulchral stones found over the graves at Mycenæ. You will see things not very dissimilar in the old reliefs found at Sparta, and now preserved in the interesting museum of that town. A strong family likeness is there. A closer examination of the palace of Tiryns showed likewise that the general arrangements of the rooms were such as agreed with Homeric descriptions. The one very distinctive feature of the house building was the construction of the doorways. This was the model of every early temple doorway in historical Greece. These suggestions are enough for the moment to show the reader what I mean by saying that we may now fairly consider not Hissarlik, but the remains of Tiryns and Mycenæ, together with the tombs of Menidi, Spata, etc., as belonging to the direct forerunners of the Homeric heroes.

Evidence from pottery.

Palace at Tiryns similar to Homeric palaces.

I say direct, not immediate, for in my opinion there was a long progress of culture in Greece during this prehistoric time. There are two distinct stages at Mycenæ.

Two stages of civilization traceable at Mycenæ.

This is proved by the tombs. Those recently found by Schliemann were deep shaft-graves, with inadequate room to lay out the dead, which were huddled or crushed into their resting place, though covered with gold masks and piled about with precious cups and ornaments of gold, silver, and bronze. Never was there a more painful contrast between the treatment of the actual body and the splendid gifts which were lavished upon it. These people seem to have built their walls of small rubble, without finish or elegance, though their vessels of gold and silver, and their ornaments, were both costly and highly finished. Those of the gold and silver cups, the famous cow's head, and a vase of alabaster, are as good as they would be in any age of Greek history. Let us call these people for convenience' sake the Dynasty of the Perseids or descendants of Perseus, whom Greek legend makes the earliest occupant of Mycenæ. But these according to the legend were ousted by the Pelopids, which name we may apply to the second race of very superior builders, who made the great "bee-hive" tombs, known as the Treasury of Atreus and its fellows. These tombs have all been rifled long ago, so that we cannot tell what ornaments the Pelopids laid beside the dead in their roomy and stately chambers. But from the fact that they covered the inside surface of the dome with plates of polished bronze, and from the fact that analogous tombs at Orchomenus and at Amyclæ (south of Sparta) have shown us graceful monuments, and at least one gold cup with designs good enough for the Italian Renaissance, we may conclude that as in building they far exceeded the Perseids, so in the elegance of their household vessels they were at least their equals. To excel even the older cups would not be easy.

Evidence from the tombs.

The "bee-hive" tombs.

In one respect both Perseids and Pelopids are silent forever. They possessed neither the art of writing nor the art of coining. Believing as I did that both Mycenæ and Tiryns were destroyed to consolidate Argos, and that this happened in the eighth or early seventh century B. C., I had predicted to Schliemann that he would find neither inscriptions nor coins, and so it turned out. Had the story told by late writers and copied into modern books been true,* there must infallibly have been both found in plenty at either place. There was in fact a bag of late Tirynthian coins found by Schliemann which dated from a poor little re-settlement in Macedonian days. But alas! so far as we can safely infer, the splendour of both these royal abodes was recorded in no written form. If ancient bards sang their praises, they were only like the earliest Celtic bards of mediæval days, who could remember and recite, but could not write. We are therefore left to imagine what we can of the life of these earliest civilized occupants of Hellenic soil from the material remains of their architecture and their art, and from the far-off echoes which this long past period carried onward into Homeric song. For, as we already insisted, the *loci* around which the later bards fixed their story were all the actual seats of an ancient and splendid royalty.

Writing and coinage unknown.

Lack of written records.

Echoes of this earlier civilization in Homer.

Perhaps the first thing which strikes us when we examine the designs and workmanship on the palaces, or in the matchless Mycenæan room in the museum at Athens, is that there are unmistakable evidences of foreign influence. The occurrence of *an ostrich egg*, probably adorned and used as a cup, in the remains of Mycenæ would in itself put the matter beyond doubt.

Ostrich egg at Mycenæ.

*I mean the citations from Diodorus and Strabo and the fact that so-called Mycenæans and Tirynthians (of course exiles) fought with the patriotic side in the Persian wars.

But there is a great deal more than this stray importation. One of the most notable designs for ornamenting surfaces at Mycenæ is what many call the repeated spiral. This very pattern I found on the ceiling of a rock temple or shrine at Kasr Ibrim, and again as the pattern on a queen's dress in the Horus Temple at Wadi Halfa (both in Nubia). These temples date from the Eighteenth Dynasty of Pharaohs—from Amenophis II. and Tothmes III. We may therefore safely ascribe this widespread design to the fifteenth century B.C., and as it is not reasonably to be assumed that the builders of Mycenæ carried it to Egypt, we may conclude that Egyptian workmen brought it to Greece. Thus the ancient legend which tells us that Danaus came with his daughters from Egypt to Argos finds its unexpected support in fact, and we are taught not to despise the general indications given us by popular tradition. But as these stories also tell us of Cadmus coming from Phœnicia, so there are oriental—Assyrian and Syrian—influences to be seen in the Mycenæan designs, especially upon the seal rings which seem to me simple importations.

Evidence from decorative design.

Oriental influence.

Even the route by which merchandise came from the East in those days can now be determined. Along a particular row of islands, reaching from Argos to Rhodes, are still found frequent specimens of that special pottery called Mycenæan, which prove that this was the track of an ancient commerce. But what is far more remarkable, as showing the force of old traditions in the Iliad, is the fact that this very series of islands, which would naturally belong to the Trojan confederacy, send their troops to fight under Agamemnon's banner. We may therefore assume with certainty that whatever refinement can be imported with delicate and expressive

Route of traders determined by pottery in the islands.

foreign luxuries, was brought by Phœnician or Egyptian ships to the coasts of Hellas. The Phœnician traders who appear in the Iliad and Odyssey are mere pirates and slave-dealers, who bring foreign wares with them as a cloak to hide a bait to promote their real designs. But when foreign kings ruled at Mycenæ these traders were probably of a higher class, and more respectable. From them the natives learned the arts of making delicate pottery, smelting metals, building with cut stone—all of which require considerable skill; and we can still follow the development of a native art from these beginnings. As regards their political and spiritual condition, we can only tell from the gigantic forts and palaces which they built, from the huge masses of stone which they moved, and from the utter absence of smaller dwellings of importance, around the king's seat, that these people lived under a despotism, which made them perform heavy tasks, and which put their lives and property into a master's hand. There was a time of which Aristotle still read in his Iliad—the Alexandrian critics since expunged it—"in my hand is life and death," which is an echo of this earlier condition. The Agamemnon known in our Iliad could hardly have dared to assert this right. But he does offer to hand over cities with their inhabitants as a gift to another chieftain—a state of things long after common in the Persian Empire, then in the kingdoms of Alexander's successors. This actual disposing of men's allegiance with their property is another distinct echo of the old absolute sovereignty.

Traders in the Iliad and Odyssey.

Evidences of despotism.

Aristotle indeed thought that the earliest monarchies in Greece, bestowed on foreigners who had brought useful arts into Greece, were both hereditary and limited in their privileges. To make a monarchy hereditary is

Earliest Greek monarchies hereditary according to Aristotle.

the instinct of all early societies. Whether the limitation of privileges was indeed an original feature, and not a boon extorted by long agitation and by taking advantage of foreign help, I greatly doubt.

Religion.

It remains to say something about the religion of this Mycenæan civilization. There are, so far as I know, only two means of attaining to the slightest knowledge on this point. How indeed can a people who had no records, who have not left one word of writing, who were observed by no external witness, tell us aught concerning their inner life? The only two possible scraps of evidence are: (1) the idols which we find among their household stuff, like the gods which Rachel concealed from Laban (Genesis XXXI. 30, 35); (2) the treatment of the dead. As regards the first we have from Troy a large number of the rude owl-headed deity whom Schliemann identified with *Glaukopis Athene*. He advanced to a new translation of *Glaukopis*, which we had rendered *gray-eyed*, declaring it to be *owl-headed*.*

Evidences from idols at Troy.

Idols not so frequent at Mycenæ and Tiryns.

But we already found that the Troy of Schliemann is something long antecedent to the Troy of Homer, or even of the Mycenæan period. In the remains of Mycenæ and of Tiryns I am not aware that little idols are at all so frequent, but still there are not wanting little images used probably as fetishes or amulets, which would naturally imply a very low state of spiritual development, did we not see even in modern times amulets and charms of various kinds used in the same way as the fetish of the savage.† If we had the re-

* As my readers are not supposed to understand Greek, I need not enter upon an explanation of this difference in the rendering of a simple, undisputed word. But they may believe me that it is so, and that the word may have passed from the latter meaning to the former.

† As an illustration of the fact that such superstition is not confined to the ignorant and uneducated, I may state that I have quite recently known a woman born of educated parents, and married to a member of the British Parliament, who put an amulet of this kind on the leg of her child, who had just been bitten by a dog.

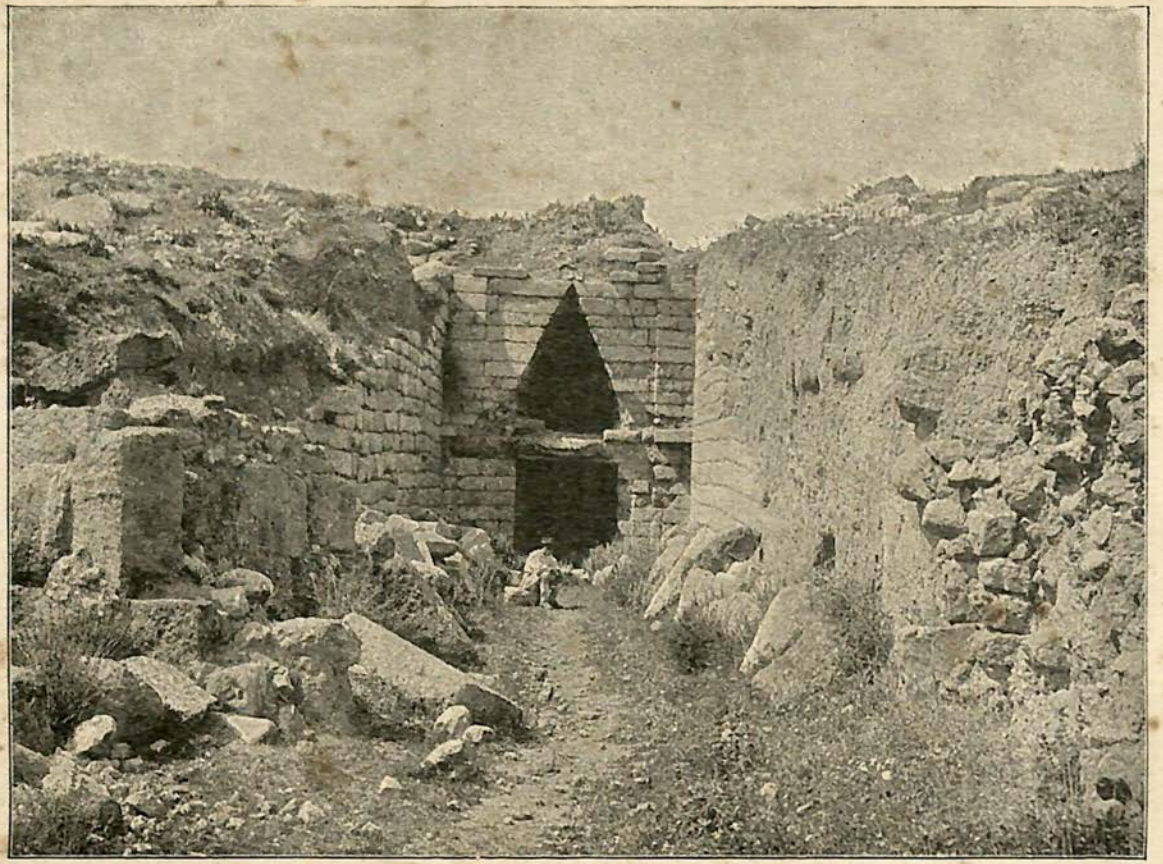
mainder of their worship, it might possibly be found on a higher level than this very widespread superstition.

The evidence from the treatment of the dead is far more important and suggestive. The precious tombs discovered by Schliemann at Mycenæ were deep under the earth, at the bottom of shafts over which there were gravestones with sculptures on them, and these again inclosed by a circle of stones, to mark the sacred place. At the bottom of these shafts, some of them twenty-six feet deep, the dead were found, as I have already told, crushed into resting places too narrow for them but covered with gold masks, and with many precious cups and ornaments of gold, silver, and bronze piled in upon the bodies. The only meaning which such precious offerings to the dead can have is to express the belief that there is some continued existence for the dead; that the precious things which they had acquired during their lives are still their property, and that it was not only an outward mark of honour from the survivors, but a cause of satisfaction to the dead, to have their most valuable property buried with them. The very contents, therefore, of Schliemann's tombs prove a belief in the existence of man after death. But what is passing strange in the discovery is the crushing of the bodies into a narrow hole, while they covered them with treasure. This treatment seems to be inconsistent, too, with the worship of ancestors, an early form of religion current among most Aryan races. We know of no place for offerings, no altar or shrine to which survivors could have come to honour the dead, unless it be that within the circle of stones over the spot some ceremonies were performed. Though there were traces of burning about some of the bodies, there seems to have been nothing found in the layers of soil over them sufficient

Evidence from the tombs.

Significance of treasures buried with the dead.

Belief in a future life.



Bee-Hive Tomb Excavated by Mrs. Schliemann. From Schuchhardt's "Schliemann."

to warrant such an inference. But it is possible that Schliemann in throwing all the earth he excavated over the great wall which here incloses the fort, has covered up some evidences of an approach from the outside, where the offerer could come close to the tombs from a far lower level. This point is still unsettled. What is however quite clear and not a little surprising is that the second race who built there adopted a wholly different mode of burial, and one specially adapted for the worship of ancestors.

Later change in mode of burial.

The famous "bee-hive" building, made of huge hewn stones, known as the Treasure-house of Atreus (the father of Agamemnon) and so often described,* was of course no treasure-house in the direct sense, but the spacious house of a deceased king, in which many treasures were originally laid. The appearance of this great construction leads us to believe that in an inner rude chamber the actual bones were laid, while the large dome-shaped hall, with a broad way leading to its massive portal, its walls adorned with shining plaques of bronze, was intended for those services and offerings whereby the living expressed their respect and affection for the dead. There was probably no god worshipped with such circumstance at Mycenæ as this deceased king, whoever he was; but the discovery of several other less splendid chambers of the same form by Schliemann shows that it was no isolated labour, but a mere instance of a well-established custom. The tomb of the king has been long since rifled; no trace of its splendour but the massive and careful construction, some remains of its bronze plating within, and of the careful carving of its portal ornaments is left to us. But these are enough

Treasure-house of Atreus.

Splendour of its construction.

*See illustration, on opposite page, for a similar "bee-hive" building; and for the "Treasury of Atreus" see Professor Tarbell's "History of Greek Art," Figs. 26 and 27.

Worship of ancestors.

to show not only the worship of ancestors as part of the religion of that day, but more generally that interest in the past and in the future which distinguishes the civilized man from the savage. The latter, like the beasts that perish, thinks only of the present or at most of the coming winter's store; it is not till each generation comes to regard itself as the mere life-holder of an entailed estate that sordid material cares are postponed to the interest in past, and the interest of future, generations.

Cremation unknown in pre-Homeric age.

It is a matter of great importance that in neither the so-called Perseid or the Pelopid tombs is there any evidence of burning the dead. They are all buried, some with partial embalming, some simply laid in the earth. The Homeric habit of burning (*incineration* as opposed to *inhumation*) seems quite foreign to these pre-Homeric people. And this is what we might expect. So long as the dead were suffered to live in the tomb and enjoy the pious offerings placed there periodically for their use, it was obvious that any destruction of that body would seem not only cruel but impious. The first desire of many early races, notably of the Egyptian, has been not to destroy, but to perpetuate the body, as the necessary condition of any, even the faintest and vaguest, future life.

Change of view in Homeric period.

But in the Homeric epoch other notions seemed to prevail. Man had learned to separate the soul, or shade, from the body, and to find for it an abode far from the tomb, in another world, where all the great company of dead meet together, and so could receive the rewards and punishment that had not been meted out to them justly in this life. This separation then of soul and body was the necessary beginning of the doctrine of future retribution. For so long as the dead

lived only in his tomb he might indeed be punished or rewarded by being deprived of, or amply supplied with, food, his arms, ornaments, and slaves, but no interference of higher powers was apprehended. The earliest picture of the next world we know is in a late book (the eleventh) of the Odyssey, and therein the whole society of the dead is gathered into the dusky realms of Pluto, and the "lamentable kingdom." Two of the most magnificent poems in the world, the sixth book of Virgil's Æneid, and Dante's Inferno, are derived directly from this model. There is, however, evidence that Mycenæan sentiment, which hid the dead in a safe chamber and watched over their preservation with affectionate care, was not ousted by Homer and the epic poets, and was never replaced in the habits of the nation by the funeral pyre and the cinerary urn. It is even probable that this latter fashion was mainly that of princes and nobles, many of whom fell in war far from their homes, and whose relations had the means to carry out this costly ceremony. There are traces enough, even in the Homeric poems, of the older fashion. But in later and historical times, we still find the ordinary practice to be burying the dead, and even still placing beside them ornaments, toys, amulets, as if the belief in the future life of the body was not extinct.

Imitations of eleventh book of Odyssey.

Burial remained the ordinary practice.

How, indeed, can we call it a belief? The evidences of decay and destruction were but too obvious. It was only a vague hope, a longing to soothe despair, an effort to prolong at least for a time the influence and the memory of the departed. Dreams and ghosts gave colour to this hope, and the visits of the dead were even dreaded as omens of evil. Some then may have felt that the burning of the body protected them from this alarming supervision. But this is not the sentiment of civilized

Reasons for burial rather than cremation.

Care of tombs.

mankind. Even now in civilized Europe, the care and decoration at stated intervals of tombs, the erection of funeral monuments, point to more than a mere recording of the place and time when a parent, a child, a friend, was laid in the earth. It recalls those lower and deeper strata of human sentiment lying at the very foundation of our mental constitution and derived from the primitive beliefs of our long-forgotten ancestors.

CHAPTER II.

THE HOMERIC AGE.

Early theory of distinct stages in Greek history.

IT is a very strange phenomenon that early Greek history appears to us in isolated moments or stages, each separated from the rest by an almost impenetrable darkness. The palaces which Schliemann discovered point to about the sixteenth century; the Iliad and Odyssey to the ninth; the earliest lyric poetry and the aristocratic society that produced it to the early seventh. It used to be a very constant problem to fill up the gaps, and learned men were ready to assume what I hold to be impossible — that after the completion of the *epos* poetic genius dried up for some centuries till the days of Archilochus.

Modern theory of more gradual development.

We are now in a position to modify considerably these cruder theories, and to put before the reader the theory of a more natural and therefore more rational development. In the first place, we now know that the prehistoric remains do not come from a single epoch or generation; that from the rudest of them (Schliemann's Troy) to the latest, the tombs of Menidi, Spata, and especially Vaphio,* there are centuries of progress. Nor did this age of great stone buildings, of rich imported merchandise, of rude native art die out long before the conditions found in the earliest portions of the Homeric poems. The traditions of a great and rich Mycenæ and Tiryns were yet fresh; the voyages of

* The reader will find these tombs discussed either in Schuchhardt's book or Schliemann, or in the early chapters of Holm's or of Busolt's Greek histories.

Phœnician pirate traders still current; Egypt was stil known as the real home of enormous wealth and culture

Gradual growth of Homeric Age.

And when we come to the "Homeric Age," here too we have been taught to discriminate layers or strata in the story; we have learned to accept its gradual growth, we are no longer obdurate as to the early date of all the books of each poem. Nay, rather, there is every reason to think that the close of the epic age, represented by those cyclic poems that are now lost, came very near the date when Archilochus broke with old tradition, with precedent, with an artificial and effete style, and drew from popular song a deep draught of splendid inspiration.

Evidence from Homer and excavated sites.

What we now have before us is to discuss how far the Homeric poems, as we have them, with the help of Hesiod and of material remains, can tell us of the real life and thought of the Greeks now rapidly crystallizing into a nationality distinct from Pelasgian, Thracian, Macedonian, Illyrian, and though severed into many conflicting societies, yet attaining some unity in language, in religion, and in political ideas. We will not attempt to enter upon the whole Homeric question, one which properly belongs to the history of Greek literature, but we must bring newer researches and conclusions to bear upon the question: How wide in time is the epoch which these poems represent, and how narrow is their adherence to real facts? These poems are of course works of the imagination. No one will think for one moment of seeking any scrap of truth, historical or even physical, in the "Battle of the Gods" (Iliad, Book XX.), nor can we believe that all the Iliad was originally composed upon one short episode of the war, while all its long years of chivalry were laid in oblivion. Both Iliad and Odyssey are clearly a selection from a

Homeric poems are works of the imagination.

great mass of poems about all the wars and adventures of a long period—the selection by a genius, and endowed with an artistic unity which did not lie in the facts, but in the poet's mind, when he chose the Wrath of Achilles or the Return of Ulysses as the warp which he filled up with his precious and variegated woof.

Iliad and Odyssey are selections.

This is the view of the question toward which scholars whose minds are open have been gravitating for the last twenty years, and now there is a sort of agreement where there was formerly nothing but bitter and arid controversy. The form in which I stated it some years ago* does not differ in substance from the fuller and clearer exposition of M. Croiset in his admirable treatment of the problem, which I here give in abridgment.

Structure of the Iliad.

The analysis of the Iliad shows us certain sections of the poem possessing very striking common characteristics. Some of them even form a chronological series, in so far as the events which they describe are relatively determined in time. If then these scenes were related in their natural order, they formed not indeed a complete epic poem, but a group of lays resembling it, by bringing before the hearer the successive moments of the same series of actions. A few lines of transition would easily explain, to such as were not intimate with the story, the connection of each piece with the foregoing lay. There are also, however, some scenes, such, for example, as the parting of Hector and Andromache (Iliad, Book VI.), which the poets were at liberty to insert at any point they thought fit, and very possibly not always at the same moment in the action.

Iliad made up of isolated lays woven into an organic whole.

Such then is the probable earliest condition of the Iliad—isolated, but connected, lays, most of them finding a fixed place according to the order of the events,

* Cf. my "Greek Literature," chapters on Homer in Vol. I.

others floating among them without any such logical determination. Hence those early lays, without producing the Iliad, clearly laid the foundation of that poem. If the actual plot was not bequeathed to those who came after, still the outlines of the plot, or the suggestion of it, is there — several great scenes forming what Aristotle in his "Poetics" calls an *artistic whole*, that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end. This was the nucleus which families or guilds of successive poets expanded and completed upon the lines of the original, though with freedom and variety. For it was not intended for one long recitation; each passage was likely, therefore, to retain a certain independence, and might even be inserted to please a particular audience. It is then not the artifice of an arranger or of a committee which has produced the Iliad, but rather the unfettered work of many poets controlled by the greatness of an early creation of genius which they desired to complete and perfect by further developments. The unity was there from the outset, but only became clear when the original sketch was filled in. To use a metaphor: The first poet had raised upon the great territory of Greek legend three or four splendid towers to mark out the domain which he claimed for himself; his successors joined these towers by new constructions, more richly decorated, but not grander than the original work, then the remaining gaps were stopped by a simple wall. So in time the whole was inclosed to form a single castle and city, which men called the Iliad.*

Not a single author, but a series of authors.

Unity of the poems accounted for.

Such being the structure of the poems, what must we expect from them as genuine evidences of civilization? In the oldest lays there will be the bard's opinion about

Value of Homeric poems for history of civilization.

* Abridged from Croiset's "Histoire de la Littérature Grecque," I., Chapter III., § 5.

the heroes whom he sings and the society in which they lived, glorified more or less according as the voice of tradition told him of bygone splendour, and his imagination led him to enhance the valour and the virtue of the princes who were his patrons. But the spiritual ground of it all, the principles he acknowledges, the emotions which he respects, the fashions which he pictures — all these are the reflex of his age, and give us a deeper and truer view of the earliest Greek society than any dry chronicle or genealogy.

Necessary change in our conception of their spontaneity.

In the days when men believed in a simple Homer, author of both Iliad and Odyssey, not to say of lesser poems, the whole narrative could be regarded in this light, and so we have many attractive pictures of the age, gathered from all the four corners of these epics. But now that we know of various layers and additions, of later poets and arrangers, we must be more cautious; for in the last-born offspring of the epic poets, we must presume a knowledge of the earlier parts, an adherence to them as models, a conscious clothing of the heroes in antique dress and manners — in fact, a certain amount of antiquarianism, which cannot but take from the value of the evidence, which is now artificially wrought, and not spontaneous.* In no respect is this more manifest than in the dialect, which is in many places clearly artificial, even constructing words upon false analogies and so producing strange forms which can never have been in real use. The whole dialect is composite and artificial, for it is more than likely that lays originally composed in the Æolic dialect

Antiquarianism in the poems.

Dialect.

* It is more than likely, as Holm has argued, that it was not till after the so-called Ionic migration that the bards of Smyrna and Miletus began to put together and enlarge primitive legends concerning the ancestors of the colonists in their Greek homes. Hence the men of Asia Minor were seeking to describe men and things of some generations earlier in Greece. Features of the later age may often have crept into their descriptions, for what antiquarian, least of all those of an early and unlearned age, has ever been proof against such mistakes?

were transformed into the more fashionable and widespread Ionic, to meet the requirements or the taste of Ionic courts. But where the metre resisted the change, the older forms were left embedded in their new surroundings, and so produced a language which was once thought a deliberate selection from various local dialects, but which is really an imperfect adaptation of the old to the new, with archaisms, natural and artificial; as it were, an old set of Drydens dealing with an older school of Chaucers, and spoiling them not a little in the process.

Spontaneity not admired by the Greeks.

But to say that even the oldest parts of the poems were the natural song of any primitive bard is to ignore the most vital feature in all Greek art. The spontaneous, the natural as such, was always regarded, in every epoch of Greek life, as merely the untutored and unrefined, and no greater censure could be expressed by any Greek critic than that the producer of a work was an *autodidact*—a self-taught man.*

Meter.

The whole structure of the stately hexameter, or Homeric meter, shows it to be an artificial growth, probably originating among the priests of Apollo at Delphi. The very scansion by quantity instead of accent (for then, as now, the Greek spoke according to accent), marks a starting point of artificiality which Greek poetry never laid aside. There are vestiges of older and simpler metres in the songs of the people; we must assume that at some definite period not long anterior to the earliest Homeric lays, hexameter verse was adopted as the fittest medium for musical recitations.

Possible influence of priests.

If, as I have intimated, this change came from a school of priests, and priests in the service of Apollo, we

*I beg the reader to note this assertion particularly; we shall have occasion to return to it many times in the course of this book. It is quite opposed to the vanity of modern life, which often professes to believe that natural genius can produce great and finished results in art and literature.

can also understand the deliberate abstention of the poets from mentioning old superstitions, ancient worships such as those of ancestors, and their eagerness to bring the whole hierarchy of the newer Olympian gods before their hearers. In this sense the words of Herodotus would receive their fullest interpretation, when he says that Homer and Hesiod made the theology of the Greeks, and assigned to the several gods their styles and attributes. Unless these gods were of recent origin, such a task would be far beyond any poet or even school of poets. But if the adventures of heroes came to be intertwined with the influence of the gods of Olympus, we can understand that the popularity of the former would accrue to the latter, and so the epic poetry would cause local gods and demons, local worships and superstitions, to be forgotten for the new and fashionable pantheon of Mount Olympus.

Homer's influence on theology.

We might indeed suppose that the older and more primitive lays would show evidences of a ruder society than the later work with which they are now combined, and it might occur to some learned man to sever the component parts, and examine them from this point of view. But such labour would, I think, be lost. For the man of genius, called Homer if you like, who welded into unity the Iliad, or the Odyssey, was surely artist enough to produce a general harmony among the parts, and give them all that general character which has imposed upon many centuries as the work of a single mind. We must therefore be content to take the poems as they stand, and draw our earliest picture of really Greek civilization from the epic poems as we have them, with the general warning that they are composed by men who lived some generations later than the historical basis of the story, or the patriarchal royalties which they

General harmony of Homeric poems.

Caution to be observed in using them as evidence.

describe, and so many evidences of a late and even decaying society may be surprised among the descriptions of what the poet thought the morning of Greek life.

Spirit of Odyssey different from Iliad.

In this respect the Odyssey has a flavour far different from the Iliad. Detailed descriptions of bloody wounds cease to play a prominent part; the shock of battle is merely stated as a fact—"All day we fought upon the shore, but on the evening came, we were worsted and were driven to our ships, losing many of our comrades." This is told as in a narrative where the adventures of travel afford the leading interest. It is easy to see that now the spirit of trading adventure was rising among the nation; the exploration of distant lands, the search for wealth across the stormy seas amid romantic dangers, fascinated the higher classes, who could not brook the shabby and confined life of the peasant, as portrayed in Hesiod. "Cette race, qui ont fait du commerce une poésie," a French writer exclaims, are those who inspired, and who delighted in, the Odyssey. But then the home virtues are also put forward; the solid advantage of having an hereditary chief who is a father to his people; the dangers of aristocratic anarchy when the king is from home; the valuable check of public feeling upon the lawless nobles, even though the poet will not admit that it had any legal force.

Rise of trade.

With all these features, which lead us to the threshold of aristocratic days, when monarchy was falling into old age and democracy was not yet weaned, the suitors of Penelope had their counterpart in many a state, till their Antinous or Eurybates got the people to join him, and massacred the rest as Ulysses had done, but as a usurper, not as a legitimate king. But with these political revolutions come also the bitter reflections upon the

A more sophisticated conception of life.

pathos and the dolour of life—the thought that the age of gold is gone by, that the gods no longer walk in the garden in the cool of the evening; that strength and beauty are fading from among men, and that older and better days are giving way to a stern and pitiless age, when the struggle for life and survival of the fittest replace the favour and the wrath of gods that can be appeased by human prayer and sacrifice. These are the considerations with which I now propose to introduce the observations I made long ago in my "Social Life in Greece," in the hope that my readers will refer to that book for details which must here be omitted owing to the wider scope and consequent limitations of space imposed upon me.

Exclusiveness of Homeric society.

Homer introduces us to a very exclusive *caste* society, in which the key to the comprehension of all the details depends upon one leading principle—that consideration is due to the members of the caste, and even to its dependents, but that beyond its pale even the most deserving are of no account save as objects of plunder. So the Homeric chieftain behaves even in battle with some consideration to his fellow chieftain; in peace and in ordinary society he treats him with the most delicate courtesy and consideration. To his wife and to the wives of his friends he behaves with similar politeness, though in a less degree, and with a strong sense of their inferiority. To his own slaves, who are as it were dignified by being attached to him, he conducts himself with consideration, as he does even to his horses and his dogs for the same reason. But there is evidence enough that the stranger who was not a guest friend, and the free labourer who was unattached to his household—these, as well as all women not belonging directly to the governing classes, were treated with reckless brutality, and in disregard of the laws of justice and mercy. A few illustrations on each of these points will be sufficient to establish the principle, and so give us a clue to gathering up details under its special heads.

Brutality to strangers and women.

The Greeks and Romans always laid great stress on the

Manners at table.

habits of the table as indicative of civilization, and it was specially noted of such mythical humanizers as Orpheus, that they had induced men to improve the tone and manners of their feasting. The Greeks of historic times not only contrasted themselves in this respect with their semi-barbarous neighbours, but even (as we shall see) estimated the comparative culture of the Greek cities by this sensitive social test. From this aspect, then, the Greeks of Homer and of Hesiod occupy a very definite position. The appointments of their feasts seem simple, but not unrefined. Each guest generally had a small table to himself well cleansed with sponges, and a special supply of bread. The washing of hands before eating was universal. With the exception of the large cup for mixing, which was often embossed, and the work of a famous artist, we hear of no plate or other valuables to ornament the room. This neat simplicity, however, does not correspond with the extraordinary quantity and rudeness of the food, and the barbarous sameness in the victuals and their preparation. The Achæan heroes seem always ready to join in a meal of great roast joints, and they hardly ever meet on any important occasion without forthwith proceeding to such a repast. Nor do we see any refinement or variety in either cooking or materials. We hear of no vegetables except among the peculiar Lotos-eaters, or of fish, except indeed that the latter is mentioned by Menelaus as the wretched sustenance of his starving comrades when wind-bound off the coast of Egypt! Here is indeed a contrast to the Attic banquet, where large joints were thought coarse and Bœotian, while fish was the greatest and most expensive of luxuries.

Simplicity.

Barbarous profusion and sameness of food.

Temperate use of wine.

Yet withal the primitive and primitively cooked materials of the banquet, in themselves no better than the "mutton and damper" of the wild Australian squatter, were accompanied by evidences of high refinement and culture. There was ruddy sweet wine, mellowed by age, and esteemed for its bouquet as well as its flavour. And yet, good as the Greeks thought it, they tempered it with water, for drunkenness was in all ages an offence against Greek taste; it was even by the immoral suitors considered fit for Centaurs, and by later Greeks for Thracians: "to drink in decent measure" was a universal rule of society. There was also present the reciting bard, who aided and was aided by the generous wine in raising the

Bards at feasts.

emotions of the guests to a warmer and loftier pitch, for he sang the deeds of men of old renown, the ancestors and models of the warriors who sat before him at their tables. This was truly the intellectual side of the Homeric banquet, a foretaste of the "Symposium" of Plato. But the Homeric Greeks were still far below the stage when intellectual conversation, in which all took part, was considered essential to social enjoyment; for the most cultivated of the heroes, Ulysses, describes it as his notion of the highest enjoyment to sit in a row of silent guests and listen to a bard singing, with ample meat and drink upon the table. There were sometimes ladies present also, as we see in the case of Helen and Arete at their respective courts, and the strong intellect and high qualities of such ladies are plainly seen in the leading part which they take in the conversation.

Women in Homeric society.

The current news of the day seems to have been the chief topic, whenever strangers were present, and we can imagine the eagerness with which men inquired concerning absent friends, when they had no other means of hearing of their welfare. So much was the want of regular communication felt that wandering beggars evidently attained an importance similar to that of the beggars and also of the pedlars in Scott's novels, who combine with the trade of selling goods that of carrying news, and were even at times employed as confidential messengers. These vagrants, in Homer's day, either carried or invented news, and obtained their living in reward for it. Thus Ulysses, in this disguise, asks his swineherd what sort of man his lost master was, perhaps he may have met him in his wanderings. And the swineherd replies:

Wandering traders and beggars.

"It were vainly striven,
Old man, with news to cheer his wife and child,
Oft needy wandering men, to fraud much given,
Have for a lodging many lies compiled:
These far too much whileome have my dear queen beguiled.

"Such she treats tenderly, enquiring all,
And in heart-bitterness doth weep and wail,
As should a wife whose lord far off doth fall.
Thou too, old man, wouldst quickly forge some tale;
But as for him, long since his life did fail;
Dogs must have torn him, and wild birds of prey;

Or, as the dead form drifted with the gale,
Fishes devoured him, and his bones this day,
Wrapt in the cold sea-sand, lie mouldering far away."*

In so similar a state of society to that of old Scotland, I fancy that the Phœnician traders may have corresponded somewhat to the pedlars, as the beggars were so analogous. The Homeric beggars do not, however, seem to have made so much money as those of Scotland and Ireland in the last century.

Primitive hospitality decaying in Homeric times.

The great courtesy and hospitality shown to strangers, even of the lowest type, nevertheless appear to me rather the remains of a more primitive state of things than the natural outburst of Homeric generosity, for even in the ideal society depicted by the poets there are many passages where the close shrewdness and calculating generosity of the Greek mind break out naïvely enough through the curtain of nobler feeling which only disguised them. I lay no stress on the absence of that modern sentiment which values a gift as a keepsake, and will not part with it even for greater value. The Homeric heroes readily gave away the gifts of respected guest friends. But this was probably because the absence of coined money had not made the broad distinction now universally felt between the market value and the sentimental value of a present. The main Homeric personalities consisted of arms, cups, and ornaments. These were obtained by barter, and taken in payment, and so even the gifts of friends were not considered in any different light from a mere money present.

Presents had no sentimental value.

But in other points hospitality was, I think, decaying. Though every chief was bound to receive a stranger, and though the more noble of them did so readily, yet there are hints of some compunctions in accepting hospitality, and some merit claimed by the host for granting it. Mentor and Telemachus rise up from Nestor's feast, and intend to return to their ship, when the old hero lays hold of them, and exclaims, "Zeus and the other immortals forbid that you should leave me and go to your ships as if I were a man short of clothing, or poor, who had no wrappers and rugs for himself and his guests to sleep in comfortably." And so when Telemachus arrives at Sparta, Menelaus's confidential servant asks, "Tell me,

Hospitality of Menelaus.

* Worsley's translation.

shall we take round the horses of these noble strangers, or send them on to some one else, who may befriend them?" But Menelaus answers in great anger: "You used not to be a fool; but now you are talking silly nonsense, like a child: as if we ourselves had not before reaching home enjoyed the hospitality of many!" Both Nestor and Menelaus were gentlemen of the old school; so that when the question is raised, they hesitate not in their answer. But another hero speaks out more naïvely: "Of course you must receive a stranger, when he comes; but who would be so foolish as to *invite* a man of his own accord, except it were a skilled artisan"—who of course would more than repay his host by his services.

Shrewdness of Homeric Greeks.

We hear too that the presents generously bestowed by the kings were recovered by them subsequently from their people, and yet this homely arrangement seems fairer and more satisfactory than the habit of modern times, when people give their kings a large income beforehand, in the vain expectation that they will spend part of it at least in hospitality. The Homeric Greeks were too shrewd and wide-awake a people to sow where they did not reap, and the increase of communication, and consequent frequency of visitors, were sure to close quickly the open door, and bar the right of entering unasked. The anxious precautions of Ulysses on entering the house of Alcinous, so similar to the acts of the exile Themistocles at the hearth of the Molossian king, show that there was risk, even in peace, for travellers; and it may be that the generous hospitality of the nobler Homeric chiefs was even then not the general rule, but the mark of a higher and more refined nature. So we find the elder Miltiades, in historical times, sitting at his open door, in contrast to the general selfishness of his neighbours. Homeric politeness seems, then, in this respect also, a forerunner of the later Greek courtesy, that it consisted rather in good taste and in tact than in reckless extravagance or in self-denial for the sake of others. Thus we find Homeric men avoiding to press an unwilling guest—a piece of good taste unknown to many of our middle classes; and evading all unpleasant subjects—a piece of tact requiring subtlety of mind and quickness of perception. The mediæval baron or the old Irish squire would readily fight a duel for a friend from mere politeness, they would not have comprehended the points on which the Greeks laid stress.

Hospitality not universal.

Tact of Homeric men.

Indeed, no one can read the account of the games in the Iliad or that of the courts of Alcinous and of Menelaus in the Odyssey, without being greatly struck with the gentleness and grace of the ideal life portrayed by the Homeric poets. The modern betting man will be surprised to see the open and gentlemanly way in which the races and other contests were conducted. Of course there was a little jostling and some cheating, especially on the part of the gods who befriended each competitor; but then we find a man's word believed that he had no unfair intention—a piece of open dealing which would hardly answer among the *habitués* of our race-courses. Above all, the conduct of Achilles is marked throughout by the finest and kindliest feeling; indeed, in no other part of the poem does he appear to nearly such advantage.

Fine feeling and fairness.

The court of Menelaus is a worthy counterpart to this picture. No doubt this hero is always represented in a very favourable point of view socially, and Helen is acknowledged to have charms not only of person, but of intellect, beyond all other women, so that this court may be regarded as the poet's ideal of refinement and politeness. But admitting this, we must also admit that the ideal is very high. There is nothing inferior to the tone of society in our best circles in this picture. The presence of Helen among the company, her luxurious elegance, her quick tact and ability—all these features show how fully the poets appreciated the influence of female society in softening the rude manners of the pugnacious heroes. So at the court of Alcinous we are especially introduced to Queen Arete as a lady honoured by her husband above the honour given to other ladies by their husbands, and greeted with kindly words by her people whenever she went out through the city, "for she was not wanting in good sense and discretion, and acted as a peace-maker, allaying the quarrels of men."

Court of Menelaus.

Influence of women.

We have thus been passing insensibly from the Homeric hero's treatment of his fellows to his treatment of the ladies of his family. The cases I have already cited show how high was the position of married women in the royal houses. The charming portrait of the Princess Nausicaa corresponds with it perfectly—and in all these ladies' habits we find the greatest liberty of demeanour, and all absence of silly jealousy on the part of their relatives. Arete, as we have just seen, was in the habit of going, apparently on foot, through her city.

Freedom of women.

Nausicaa thinks that if her gossiping townsmen see her passing through the streets with so handsome a stranger as Ulysses, they will at once set him down as her intended husband, and censure her behind backs for despising all her Phæacian suitors. And when Ulysses has apparently forgotten her, and she feels somewhat heartsore about him, she does not think it unmaidenly to lie in wait for him where he cannot pass her, and gently cast up to him that though now honoured and courted by all the nation, yet to her he once owed his rescue from want and hunger. These and many other passages show that the Homeric ladies enjoyed a liberty unknown in good society at Athens, though perhaps allowed in other parts of Greece; and it will be a question for special discussion hereafter, why the Athenians, of all Greeks, retrograded most from the higher attitude of the epic age. More especially, the abduction of Helen and the seduction of Clytemnestra seem to imply a very free intercourse among the sexes, even to admit of such attempts being made. From this point of view Æschylus felt with a true instinct the independent and free attitude of a reigning queen when her husband was from home. So Penelope entertains even wandering strangers, and has long interviews with them, in the hope of hearing of Ulysses, and there was nothing unseemly in doing so. Sophocles, in his dialogues between Clytemnestra and Electra, was misled by the customs of his day, and did not feel the epic freedom of women sufficiently. It is also important to note that this liberty was not the privilege of the higher classes, as might possibly be supposed; for a remarkable simile says, "Why should we now revile one another, like women who in some angry quarrel go into the middle of the street and abuse each other with reproaches both true and false?" We shall find the same license implied in many of the lyric poets.

Later retrogression of Athenians.

But I do not feel at all sure whether the very mild censure expressed against infidelity is to be regarded as a trustworthy reflex of the morals of the times. No doubt the painful facts which I have noticed above must have blunted the moral sense of men on these delicate relations. Though we nowadays rate personal purity so highly that the loss of it by misfortune is hardly less excused by society than its abandonment through passion, yet in the Homeric times, when the compulsory infidelity of a wife as a prisoner of war was openly recognized,

Leniency shown to immorality.

and in no way reprehended, this callous attitude may have reflected its influence upon cases of voluntary sin, and so they came to be regarded with much indulgence. All this is possible, and may be allowed, I think, some weight. So also the open concubinage allowed to married men often afforded a plea for retaliation and a justification in the case of crime.

Poet's concessions to women in his audience.

But yet, after all these allowances, I think we must still attribute the most important reason for the apparent leniency with which the adultery of princesses is regarded to the poet's own social position, and to the audience before whom he sang. Doubtless noble ladies were present at his songs; he owed to their favour many precious gifts, and perhaps a comfortable retreat in the precincts of the palace. It was necessary then to treat them, as he does the kings, with peculiar leniency, and to set down their delinquencies to the special temptations of the gods, rather than to their own wickedness.

It was, I think, for this part of his audience that the poet inserted the list of celebrated ladies whom Ulysses met in the lower regions. I hardly think the male part of the audience felt sufficient interest in them. If they did, it would be an additional proof of the prominence of noble ladies in their society, and of the celebrity which a lady of exceptional beauty and rank might attain. There can be no doubt that this passage was very similar to the fuller catalogue of female worthies usually ascribed to Hesiod.

Indulgent view of Helen's conduct.

Despite all that the advocates of Homeric morals may say, we but seldom find throughout the poems a really strong reprobation of Helen's adultery, even in her own mind. She is never spoken of by others as disgraced in the eyes of men, she is never regarded as a castaway, or unfit to return to her position in Menelaus's palace. If she had not caused bloodshed and misery by the Trojan War, I see little reason to think that her crime would have been regarded much more seriously than that of Aphrodite in the lay of Demodocus.

Clytemnestra.

The treatment of Clytemnestra is, I think, equally lenient, if we consider her more violent character and that she added the crime of murder to her adultery. She is specially said to have been of a good disposition, and to have stood firm as long as the old bard whom Agamemnon had left in charge of her was there to advise her. The shade of Agamemnon of course speaks more sharply; but the advice put into his mouth shows

how strong was the influence and intimate the relation of married women as regards their husbands: "Take care not to speak your whole mind to your wife, but keep back some thing"—an advice which is sometimes given in the present day by people who pretend to be practical men, and who have never heard of Agamemnon. Noble ladies then came strictly within the limits of the exclusive caste, they were treated with courtesy, and even too great leniency, and occupied a very important position in aristocratic society.

The very same remark will hold good of the servants attached to noble houses. They were often, as we are told, children of good birth, brought up with the children of the family, after they had been bought from the vagrant pirates who had kidnapped them. In fact, there appears to have been no traffic such as afterwards existed, which brought slaves of inferior races, usually Thracians and Syrians, into Greek ports. There was, in Homer's day, no feeling of shame at enslaving other Greeks; nor, indeed, had the Greeks separated themselves in idea from other nations under the title of Hellenes. So the slave was, or at least might be, socially his master's equal; and I think the bards take pains to tell us that those who distinguished themselves by fidelity to their masters were, after all, of no common origin (like the wretched day-laborers who worked for hire), but were really, though lowered by misfortune, members of the same caste society of which I am now speaking.

Confidential servants.

These confidential servants were, perhaps, exceptions; for we find the faithlessness of the mass of Ulysses's household coupled with the general reflection "that Zeus takes away half a man's virtue in the day that slavery comes upon him." If we wish, however, to see the good side of the matter, we need only read what is told of Euryclea and of Eumæus the swineherd, to see how thoroughly they belonged to the family, and felt with it against the lower domestics. Eumæus tells the disguised Ulysses the history of his life, and of his intimate relations to Laertes and Anticlea. He speaks with gratitude of the comfortable position which he holds, but nothing can compensate for the exile in which his circumstances have placed him. He longs to see his old patrons, to talk with them, be entertained by them, and to carry back to his country home some token of their affection in the shape of a present.

The swineherd in the Odyssey.

Euryclea, who plays a leading part through the poem, is clearly one of the mainstays of the house, and so self-devoted in her conduct that we feel hurt with Ulysses as we do nowhere else in the whole poem, when he threatens her, should she be wanting in discretion. There is a curious combination of harshness and of high feeling in this passage, which is one of the finest in either poem. The old nurse, recognizing him suddenly by his scar, lets everything fall, and the bath pours over the floor. Overcome by a burst of mingled joy and grief, she cries out and looks round to Penelope, whose eyes are darkened and her mind distracted by Athene that she may not perceive it. Ulysses seizes her by the throat, and whispers vehemently: "Nurse, why will you destroy me—you that nursed me at your breast—now that I am come home a way-worn sufferer after twenty years? But since god has allowed you to recognize me, silence! and let no one in the house know it, [for if you do] I solemnly declare that I shall not spare you, though you are my nurse, when I am putting to death the other women servants in my house." And she answers: 'Child, how could you say such a thing? You know how tanch is my resolve, and that I shall keep the secret, like some ard stone or mass of iron. But when the day of vengeance omes I can tell you who are the women who are dishonouring our house." He answers: "Nurse, why should *you* tell of hem? 'tis not your business, I shall find them out for myself. Keep you silent and leave it to the gods." Such slaves iffered in social standing but little from the free attendants who held a very honourable position in the retinue of the chiefs, just as well-bred gentlemen and men of respectability are now not ashamed to perform menial duties at the courts of kings and governors.

The nurse of Ulysses.

What consideration those received who lived apart from the reigning caste, or made themselves obnoxious to it, appears painfully enough in the Homeric poems and in Hesiod. If we consider the punishment of his rebellious household by Ulysses, or the fate threatened to Irus by the suitors, if he declines to fight with Ulysses, we see what treatment rebellion or disobedience met at their hands. The Greeks were always a passionate people, and wreaked fierce vengeance to satisfy their wrath. Thus men did not abstain altogether from mutilation of the living; thus Achilles keeps insulting the dead body

Greek love of revenge.

of his foe, and thus even queens desire to eat the raw flesh of their enemies.

Wretched life of hired labourers.

But the utterance of Achilles in the nether world is still more remarkable on the position of the poor, who are unattached to the houses of the great. "Talk not to me," says the hero, "of honours among the dead; I would rather be a hired servant on earth, and that to a poor man, than rule as a king among the shades." In other words, I had rather choose the most wretched existence conceivable on earth than rule beneath. Accordingly the hired servants of poor farmers are selected for this distinction. Is not this hint thoroughly borne out by the state of things we meet in Hesiod? If the poor-farmer class, though personally free, had such a hard life as he describes, how wretched must have been the hired servant, whom the poet recommends his hearers to turn out as soon as the press of farm work was over. There must, then, have been an abundance of such servants, since they could be again procured at pleasure, and we can conceive how miserable must have been their pay and lodging on Hesiod's farm.

Hesiod's testimony to capacity of ruling class.

But the poet Hesiod himself had no enviable days. And of all his griefs, undoubtedly the foremost was a patent fact seldom alluded to by the polite Homeric bards—the gross injustice of the chiefs in deciding lawsuits and their readiness to devour bribes. The fable he adduces implies plainly enough that they felt a supreme contempt for the lower classes and their feelings; they openly proclaimed the law of might, and ridiculed the lamentations of the ill-used and injured husbandman. The repeated reminder to the people of Ithaca that Ulysses had not thus treated them, but had been considerate to them as a father, almost implies that he was exceptional in his justice. And indeed what could we expect from a society which regarded the Pallas Athene of the Iliad and Odyssey as its ideal of intellect and virtue? But in Homer we see only the good side (if we except the Ithacan suitors, who are described as quite exceptional); in Hesiod we are shown only the bad side. The wretched farmer looked on the whole class of aristocrats as unjust and violent men, that cared not at all about his rights and his interests.

Perhaps if we strike an average or balance, we shall obtain a fair view of the real state of things in these old days. Possibly the aristocrats who managed the states after the abolition of

monarchy in Bœotia were worse than the single kings; for we know nowadays that boards and parliaments have neither conscience nor human feeling, so that they commit injustices almost impossible to individuals, and moreover they are deaf to the appeal that touches a single heart. But it is surely a certain proof of the antiquity of Hesiod's poems, and perhaps the most hopeless feature in his difficulties, that there seems no redress possible for the injustice of the nobles, except the interference of the gods whose duty it is to punish wrong among men. The poet insists that the gods do see these things, and that they will interfere; but this very insisting, coupled with the desponding tone of the whole book, lets us see plainly what was the general feeling of the lower classes. For as to obtaining help from public opinion of any sort, even from the "harsh talk of the people" in Homer, or the grumbling in the assembly to which Telemachus appeals—there is no trace of it. The earnest and deeply outraged husbandman never dreams of a revolution, of calling the assembly to declare its anger, or even of enlisting some of the chiefs against the rest. It speaks well for the sterner and sounder qualities of the Bœotian farmers that such circumstances did not induce despair, but rather a stern resolve to avoid the wicked judgment-seats of the aristocrats, above all things to keep clear of litigation, and to seek the comforts of hard-earned bread and of intelligent husbandry. This, then, is the isolated position of the works of Hesiod—the poet of the Helots—of which I have spoken already.

Attitude of lower classes as seen in Hesiod.

And yet in the moral parts of his writings the Greeks of later ages found much that was attractive. The "Works and Days" became even an ordinary hand-book of education. This fact will not surprise us, when we consider that in one broad feature the moral lessons of Hesiod run parallel with the pictures of Homer, in this the exponent of the most permanent features in Greek character—I mean that combination of religion and shrewdness, that combination of the honourable and the expedient, which, though it often jars upon us, yet saved the Greeks, one and all, from sentimentality, from bombast, and from hypocrisy. The king Ulysses and the farmer Hesiod have the same respect for the gods and the same "eye to business," the same good nature and the same selfishness, the same honour and the same meanness. Perhaps the king was

Popularity of Hesiod's poems.

laxer in his notions of truth than the husbandman; just as the Cavalier thought less of lying than the Roundhead. But perhaps this arose from his greater proximity to the gods of the epic poets, who had no difficulty at all in practising falsehood.

In another point, however, the king, owing to his manifold pursuits and interests, escaped a grave danger. No ambition whatever lay open to Hesiod and his fellows, save the making of money and laying up stores of wealth, as he says, "to wretched mortals money is dear as their souls." In those depraved days, when a verdict could be bought under any circumstances from the corrupt chiefs, money was power, even to a greater extent than in more civilized conditions. Hence the natural tendency among the lower classes must have been to postpone everything to the amassing of wealth—nay, rather, there was no other occupation open to them. So we find that both Tyrtæus and Solon, early poets and political reformers, set down greed of wealth as the real cause of the disorders in their respective states. The same tendency is plain enough in king Ulysses, and shows itself even ludicrously in the midst of the deepest melancholy and the greatest danger; as, for example, when he finds himself cast upon a desolate shore and abandoned, and when he sees Penelope drawing gifts from the suitors; but his lofty and varied sphere of action forces it back into a subordinate place. Yet I would have the reader note this feature carefully, as we shall meet it again in many forms throughout later Greek society.

Greed of wealth characteristic of early as of later Greeks.

There is another point on which Hesiod is vastly inferior in social attitude to Homer; I mean in his estimate of women. But the plain-spoken bard was not singing at courts, where queens sat by and longed to hear of worthies of their own sex; nor did he contemplate the important duties of the housemother in the absence of her husband in wars and on the service of his state. Hence it was that Æschylus, though living in a democracy where women fared badly enough, yet found and felt in the epic poets such characters as his Clytemnestra, a reigning queen, invested with full powers in the king's absence—free to discuss public affairs, to receive embassies, and act as her judgment directed her. All these things were foreign to Hesiod's attitude; yet surely it is strange that in describing farm life and farm duties he should not have

Hesiod's attitude to women contrasted with Homer's.

thought more of the important duties of the housewife—duties which throughout all Greek and Roman history raised the position of the countrywoman above that of the townswoman, whose duties were less important, and whom the jealousy of city life compelled to live in fear and darkness. Yet the first allusion in the "Works and Days" is rude enough: "You must start with a house, a wife, and an ox to plough, and have your farming implements ready in the house." There is, I believe, no farther notice of the woman till the short advice concerning marriage; and here too nothing is stranger than the brevity with which the subject is noticed, and the total silence concerning the all-important duties which even Homer's princesses performed, and which were certainly in the hands of the women of Hesiod's acquaintance. We might almost imagine that some sour Attic editor had expunged the advice which Hesiod owes us on the point, and had justified himself with the famous apophthegm of Pericles (or rather of Thucydides), that "that woman is best who is least spoken of among men, either for good or for evil." Hesiod implies, indeed, that a man may know something of the young women in the neighborhood, and this supposes some freedom of intercourse; yet he seems to consider the worst feature of a bad wife her desire to sit at meals with her husband, an opinion which in his age, and his plain and poor society, seems very harsh indeed.

Scant notice of women in Hesiod.

However, then, I may be accused of having drawn Homeric society in darker colours than it deserves, though I have given authority for every charge, yet on the Hesiodic society all intelligent students of the "Works and Days" are pretty well agreed. It pictures a hopeless and miserable existence, in which care and the despair of better things tended to make men hard and selfish, and to blot out those fairer features which cannot be denied to the courts and palaces of the Iliad and Odyssey. So great, indeed, is the contrast, that most critics have assumed a change of things between the states described in Homer and in Hesiod; they have imagined that the gaiety and splendour of the epic bard could not have coexisted with the sorrows and the meanness of the moral teacher. But both tradition and internal evidence should convince us that these poems, if not strictly contemporaneous, are yet proximate enough in date to be considered *socially* pictures of the same times, differing, as I have explained, in the attitude of the poets, but not in

Hesiod's gloomy picture of life, in contrast with Homer's.

the men and the manners which gave them birth. If so, Hesiod has told us what the poor man thought and felt, while the Homeric poet pictured how kings and ladies ought, in his opinion, to have lived and loved. And with all the contrasts, I think we can see conclusively that the fundamental features were the same, and that they were the legitimate seed from which sprang the Greeks of historic times.

Homeric conception of sorrow.

But far more striking than the sorrows and hardships of Hesiod's life, described in the foregoing pages, is the conception of sorrow as a friend that keeps company with man, and in some sort assumes the garb of a friend. We have it in the poet Shelley :

> " Come, be happy, sit by me, shadow-vested Misery."

We have it in Shakespeare's :

> " Grief fills the room up of my absent child, . . .
> Puts on his pretty looks"—

but who should expect such a mental attitude in Homer? Yet it is there, in the Odyssey, plainly enough in the famous scene when Penelope will not recognize her husband because she is now so wedded to her grief that it has made his presence a perplexity, and the disappointed hero finds himself in his home, but no longer at home, with the wife whom he had longed for through twenty years. This is indeed the most modern of the many modern features of the Odyssey, and one which had escaped notice till I called attention to it in my " History of Greek Literature."

Modern touches in the Odyssey.

We may conclude our sketch by a summary of the advances in culture which we can fairly attribute to the Homeric Age, meaning by that term Greece, the coast of Asia Minor, and the intervening islands from the prehistoric Mycenæan age down to about the year 700 B.C.

The greatest gain which we can see in the Homeric society over that revealed to us by the old Mycenæan

Advances in culture in the Homeric Age.

ruins, and the bee-hive tombs, is the substitution of home or native princes for foreigners. If the Homeric chiefs were lineally descended from the old invaders, they had at all events become indigenous. It is no longer Cadmus or Danaus that brings civilization to the astonished natives, and so imposes upon them his sway, but a native king, speaking their language, and recognized as one of themselves. Round the principal chief there has sprung up a native aristocracy, each member of which has his own court and possessions, and is ready to take the leading place, whenever his own prowess and the circumstances of his rule permit him to do so. Amid this rivalry of isolated rulers, oftener at feud than at peace, the masses of the free population are gaining in importance, for their favour must be sought by every ambitious leader. There are as yet no Greek polities, where the majority enact laws and frame an independent constitution ; but the germs of it are there—the growth of public opinion, the decay of absolutism, the recognition of precedent as a binding obligation, the claim of every sentient being, even the slave and the beast of burden, to some consideration.

Native-born kings and aristocracy.

Growth of public opinion.

Decay of trade and decline of luxury.

But with this home development there seems to have been a decay in commerce, certainly in the importation of foreign luxuries. The old foreigner, an absolute king commanding unlimited forced labour, and keeping in direct contact with his Phœnician or Egyptian home, had both wealth to buy and a recognized ship service to convey the ivory, the gold, the silver, the bronze, wrought by cunning artists in their old homes. With the rise of home rulers and the multiplication of courts this concentrated power and the close connection with older art centres seem to have decayed, and the chiefs of Greece, as contrasted with those of the Asiatic coast,

were probably not so splendidly appointed as the old foreign kings of "much-golden" Mycenæ. The traders were no longer in the pay or under the control of the chiefs, but isolated Phœnician and Carian speculators, combining the pedlar, the pirate, and the kidnapper with the tradesman, and trusting to the speed of their boats and their skill in sailing to escape the vengeance of those whom they had cheated and plundered. But of course the day was not far distant when the clever Greeks began to emulate those enterprising harvesters of the sea. The effect of these things upon the material arts is obvious enough. With a decay of importation came at first the rudeness of relapse, then the development of home industry to replace what they could not obtain from abroad.

Effect on Greek art.

As regards society, we have only the manners of the court and those of the country boor depicted to us. What may be called the life of the middle classes, both in town and country, is still to us a blank. I have shown elsewhere the curious contrasts of refinement and barbarism which characterize the Homeric heroes. Refinement certainly predominates, but there is a background of savagery, very like what observers tell us about the Samoan Pacific islanders, who combine the most graceful and courtly manners with great freedom in morals and even survivals of cannibalism. The respect and attention paid to Homeric princesses, so different from the later fashion at Athens and in Ionia, also suggest to us the great importance attached to the Samoan princesses, who are, sentimentally at least, reigning queens in the native villages.

Refinement with savagery.

There is a code of morals, mostly traditional, but also based upon certain laws supposed to be established by the gods, and these gods sanction and support truth

Moral standard external and arbitrary.

and honesty in men, though according to the legends they regarded their own actions as perfectly free from all moral considerations. In this they were comparable to those mediæval sovereigns, who, while insisting upon obedience to the moral law from their subjects, asserted themselves in their passions and their pleasures as above all law. On the whole, therefore, while there was a belief in the government of the world by the gods, there were so many exceptions and excuses, so many ways of evading the wrath and buying the favour of these gods, that we do not wonder at the low standard of truth and honour which is found in the nation, as we know it historically.*

Independent excellence in art and literature.

But the high intelligence of the people was sure to see its way through these difficulties, and this high intelligence was shown not only in the adoption of foreign handicrafts and the production of new work on independent lines, but in the extraordinary excellence of their literature.

Development of Homeric poems.

The Homeric poems show clear traces of a long literary development, in which the oldest parts are to all appearance equal, if not superior, to the rest. They seem even to have had a long history, if they were transformed from the ruder Æolic dialect into that composite and artificial speech which is now known as the Epic dialect. All this presupposes not only great poetical faculty on the part of the earliest bards, but an almost equal power of appreciation, assimilation, and coördination in those who transformed these lays and ordered them into dramatic unities, which satisfied for centuries the critical faculty of the most critical of people. It is, indeed, not till the last twenty years that we may say

* The dishonesty of the Greeks was proverbial among the nations that came in contact with them; *cf.* "Social Life in Greece," pages 122 *sqq.*

that the bold scepticism of Wolf * has found a modified acceptance, and that we may expect in any new book on Greek literature to find the old belief in the unity of plan and of authorship in Iliad and Odyssey laid aside for some compromise with the sceptical school.

Wolf's theory.

* I refer to Wolf's famous "Prolegomena to the Iliad," published in the end of the last century, where was first broached the theory that this poem was not the work of a single poet, composing according to a fixed plan, but the conglomerate of many short lays of various hands.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT IN GREECE, 700–500 B. C.

Precise date of earliest historical records impossible to define.

THE greatest of Greek historians, Grote, acting under one of those sudden attacks of credulity to which every sceptic is liable, fixed not 700 roundly, but 776 B. C. precisely, as the moment when we could declare that historical records commenced in Greece. It was the received date for the celebration of the first Olympic festival, and from that day onward he held that every four years Greeks had met at that holy assembly and commemorated the event by naming the victor publicly in a permanent record, most likely upon stone. Probably the most important contribution I have made to the better understanding of early Greek history was the exploding of this superstition. The learned world in Germany at all events, and I suppose consequently in England, has accepted the proof I offered, that this list, like the genealogies of kings and priests which went back to the gods, was not a genuine record coming down from early times, but the deliberate concoction of a clever man, Hippias of Elis, who did not flourish till after 400 B. C. He used what ancient dedications and inscribed offerings he could find at Olympia, and so obtained some dates far back in the seventh century; the earlier part he supplied from various legends, and from his own imagination.*

The fraud of Hippias of Elis.

* *Cf.* the appendix of my "Problems in Greek History."

The earliest firm ground we reach after wandering through land of mist and legend, of comparative mythology and epic poetry, is the reign of Gyges of Lydia, whose career is sketched by Herodotus, and with whom we know from an extant fragment that the great poet Archilochus was acquainted, probably as a contemporary. The date of Archilochus was formerly placed somewhat before 700. We now know from astronomical data—an eclipse mentioned in this reign—that he lived in the first thirty years of the following century. There are indeed many other precise dates far earlier than this to be found in our Greek histories. There is Pheidon of Argos, one of the earliest despots, who coined money, who humbled Sparta, who celebrated the eighth Olympiad, who figures therefore under the year 747 B. C. There is the foundation of many cities in Sicily from 736 onward, as reported by Thucydides, who is to most Greek scholars far more inspired than their Bible.

Reign of Gyges.

Pheidon of Argos.

All these dates are to be rejected, as being the fabrications of a later age, when men began to count downward from the demigod Heracles, the divine forefather of the early rulers of Sparta and Argos and Corinth, and the tenth generation was fixed upon for Pheidon, the founder of trade, and Archias, the founder of colonies. Commerce there was, and colonies there were, of course, not only in the eighth century, but far earlier. The Phænicians had shown the way to the Greeks, and this versatile people was not slow in rivalling their teachers. But the fixing of these things by Olympiads or precise years seems to me wholly chimerical. In all our excavations we have never found one scrap of writing on stone (no doubt the earliest material used) which leads us to believe that the Greeks had records

Reckoning by Olympiads not trustworthy.

in that century. It is most probable that Mycenæ and Tiryns were overthrown and their population embodied with Argos during this epoch, and yet, as I have above observed, no trace of writing appears, amid other handiwork so developed and artistic, as would cause us to assume it as certain. All we can therefore say, and happily it is enough for our purpose, is that Greece about the year 700 B. C. shows a considerable progress, or at least change, from the condition in which the Homeric bards knew or imagined it. Their works were in common use, and recited daily even then, but the hearers had adopted other fashions in politics, other tastes than war, other ideals in morals and religion. This is what I have called the Greece of the Lyric Age,* because our principal knowledge of it comes from the fragments of the great lyric poets, who were then replacing the epic in esteem and in popularity.

Greece of the Lyric Age.

The historical causes of this change in the state of Greek lands (I include of course the islands of the Ægean and the coast settlements of Asia Minor) are not far to seek. With the decay or abolition of foreign sovereignties, the home chiefs broke up more and more into small and isolated powers, busy with border feuds, and hardly able to sustain any large policy of coalition or of commerce. Hence it appears that an invasion of hardy Doric mountaineers brought new masters into the Peloponnesus, and replaced the older royalties. That these were a small body of conquerors, who found it necessary to make a compromise with the vanquished, appears clearly enough from the fiction that the leading houses, the kings of Sparta, Messene, Argos, Corinth, were not Dorian invaders, but Achæan descendants of the hero Heracles. We have not evidence enough

Dorian invasion.

* *Cf.* my "Social Life in Greece," 6th edition, Chap. IV.

to state as certain, what seems very probable, that it was by an infantry armed with iron or steel weapons that the Dorians overthrew the Achæan nobles, who fought chiefly from chariots, as we may infer not only from Homer, but from the oldest tomb-reliefs and figured vases. If so, it was the oldest occurrence on Greek soil of that struggle between horse and foot in battle of which the last decisive instance was the overthrow and slaughter of the Frankish chivalry of the Morea by the Grand Catalan Company on the field of Orchomenus in 1310 A. D.*

Struggle of Dorians and Achæans.

In consequence, however, of this invasion, there seems to have been a return wave, or an outward wave† to the coasts of Asia Minor, and there, in richer soil, in contact with richer nations, and by the addition of land to sea commerce, the Æolians and Ionians of the coast attained to a wealth and comfort far superior to those enjoyed by the hardy mountaineers, or even the stirring islanders in and about the Hellenic peninsula.

"Return wave" to Asia Minor.

Moreover, about the beginning of the seventh century B. C. the Asiatic Greeks came into permanent contact with two monarchies, from which they learned all the luxuries of ages of development. In the first place, the concession of a Greek mart at Naucratis in Egypt, though under many jealous restrictions,‡ established relations between the Greeks and Egypt, relations rapidly increasing when Psammetichus established him-

Influence of Egyptians on Greeks.

* *Cf.* Finlay's "History of Greece," IV., 150.

† It is not certain, but probable, that the Greek race came through Asia Minor into Greece, and that they may have left settlements on their way, or otherwise preserved the tradition of an old occupation of that country. Thus the Trojans and Lycians, especially their leaders, are assumed in Homer to be of the same race, descended from the same gods, and speaking the same language as their Argive invaders. It is the theory advocated in E. Curtius's history, to which I refer in speaking of a *return wave*. It is probable theory, but by no means proved.

‡ The early Naucratis corresponded in its own day to the English mart at Hong Kong in ours, where a foreign nation was allowed to settle and trade in spite of great jealousies on the part of a bigoted and exclusive government.

self on the throne by the aid of Greek and Carian mercenaries (668 B. C.). Here then the Greeks came to know a people far older, wealthier, and more civilized than themselves, and learned all manner of inventions, and of better methods in arts and crafts. They seem to have imported, and even produced at Naucratis, pottery of a finer quality and better design than the Egyptian. But in other arts they must have been very inferior. Who could imagine, for example, that Greeks of that date could produce anything like the magnificent jewelry found upon the body of the Princess Aahotep of the Eighteenth Dynasty or upon those of Eknoumit and Merit, recently discovered by Mr. de Morgan and dating from the Twelfth Dynasty, that is to say from about 2500 B. C. !*

Effect on the fine arts.

Secondly, the rise of the Lydian monarchy and its opposition to the Median created a great eastern court at Sardis within easy reach of the coast settlements. This monarchy, copying of course the splendours and habits of the older oriental monarchies, was another example to the Asiatic Greeks of material prosperity, and probably of courtly manners. The particular channel through which the Greeks not only of Ionia, but of the mother-land, learned most both from Egypt and from Lydia was that mercenary service, which seems the natural outcome of Greek energy, and which became a leading profession, if not the leading profession of Hellenes, until the extinction of their liberty and the *pax Romana* abolished local wars throughout the basin of the Mediterranean. To fight for the pay of wealthier states, without any regard to patriotism or justice, was a Greek practice from the days of the poet Alcæus, whose

The Lydian monarchy.

Greeks as mercenary soldiers.

* *Cf.* the interesting article on these discoveries by M. Amélineau in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for July 15, 1895.

brother served under Nebuchadnezzar, to those of Scopas, who led the forces of Egypt against Antiochus the Great, and even the kings of Sparta were not ashamed to undertake such work.* More particularly in the conflicts of Medians and Lydians, the Greeks were frequently employed on the side of the remoter powers against the Lydian monarchs, whom the Ionian cities found proximate, and therefore more exacting, masters. So constant indeed were the offers of the Ionians to help the Medes against the Lydians, that the word to *Medise* became a technical term, used by Herodotus even after the Medes had been absorbed under the Persian monarchy of Cyrus and his heirs. In these quarrels and serving in these armies, many Greek soldiers entered not only Sardis but Ecbatana and Babylon, Tyre and Sidon, Memphis and Thebes, and we may be sure that the Greek inscription cut by them on the leg of the colossus at Abu Simbel (about 600 B. C.) was by no means a record of their earliest visit to these far distant lands.† It is to be noted also that these mercenaries were not mere paupers, or adventurers such as those who now accept "the queen's shilling" for want of hope or sustenance, but often exiled aristocrats, ambitious marauders like the followers of Cortes and Pizarro, or of Drake or Frobisher, who combined love of strange experiences with the chance of making a rapid and amazing fortune.

Greeks fight with Medes against Lydians.

Thus the Hellenic people not only came to cover a larger area of diverse country, the Greek peninsula, the whole coast of Asia Minor from the Hellespont to Mount Taurus, and all the intervening islands down to

Spread of Greek civilization and enterprise east and west.

* This was in Syria and Palestine in 200 B. C. "Greek Life and Thought," page 494.

† I have myself found traces of very old Greek writing on a temple over against Wadi Halfa in Nubia, higher up the Nile than Abu Simbel.

Crete, but individuals of the race, chiefly as mercenary soldiers, but also as pirates and buccaneers, scattered into a far wider region, and learned the products and ways of divers men. These were the pioneers of those later colonies, long after the Ionic migration, which carried Greek civilization and Greek enterprise as far as Sicily, Cumæ in Italy, and even Massilia (Marseilles) in the West, while it reached at least to Phaselis (Pamphylia) in the East, and was only stayed by stringent restrictions from reaching up the Nile to Memphis. But Naucratis was there, and presently Cyrene, from which the oasis of Jupiter Ammon was reached by Greeks before Pindar's time. It was sought as an oracle, but the Greeks would not have been Greeks if they had not combined their religion with a bit of trading. The most surprising feature in this so widely-spread and parcelled-out race was the distinctness with which its nationality was preserved. There seems to have been no difficulty whatever in distinguishing a Greek from a non-Greek population, and in spite of all the many colonies, and the necessary intermarriages of the colonists with the natives, we do not hear of mongrel populations, about whose Hellenedom there was any doubt, except perhaps the coast cities in Pamphylia, at the easternmost extreme of the Greek world, Selge and Phaselis, or whatever they may have been called, and some cities of Cyprus, which showed so strong an infusion of Samnites as to make their nationality doubtful. But these are only few and unimportant exceptions, very obscure in history; the main fact remains as I have stated it.

Preservation of Greek national individuality.

Within Hellenedom, however, the uniformity we should consequently have expected was not to be found. There were all manner of traditions, from those of the

Variety of dialect, religion, etc., in Hellas.

Spartan noble, who was considered by every Hellene the aristocrat of the race, down to the obscure islander who lived on the rocks of Seriphos or Pholegandros by laborious fishing. These were Dorians, Æolians, Ionians, Bœotians, Thessalians, all speaking their various dialects; all worshipping local gods, which were only externally harmonized by the poets and priests who sought a union of religious sentiment; all developing many differences of custom into distinct and even contrasted codes of law. This is the variety in unity, the harmony in discord, which produced that extraordinary many-sidedness that is one of the secrets of the permanence of Greek culture. It fits every phase of modern civilized life in some respect, in some department of art, in some development of politics.

Many-sidedness of the Greeks.

I know not that I can better illustrate this Hellenic unity, shown (as Grote expounded long ago) by a common language, a common religion, and common festivals, than by imagining the United States with the central control so weakened and laid asleep that each state followed its own bent, and worked out its own problems, without check from Washington, even in the case of local quarrels and civil wars. There would remain that community of sentiment, the feeling of a common origin, a common development, language, and general likeness in religion and laws, which would make the members of all the states still feel the common bond, and still unite occasionally in a common effort against an invader, or an enemy of foreign race. But the many varieties of the states in dialect, in mixture with other populations, in conditions of climate and hence of produce, would make the contrasts between Maine and Texas far more obvious than the deeper similarities. The discovery of steam reduces the enormous differ-

Hellenic unity; analogy of United States.

ences otherwise inevitable from the territorial vastness of North America, for the members of the conglomerate of independent states could pass from one to the other as easily as the Greek in his sailing boat from coast to coast.

Details of early Greek history not extant.

Hence the history of Greece in these early centuries, if we possessed it, would be the history of a great number of independent states, each with its own interests, quarrels, legislations, literature, traditions. These details are nearly all lost, and perhaps it is so far well, as no single mind and no single pen could compass the subject, any more than any one man could write the history of the counties of England, which are merely handled from the antiquarian aspect.* But in the fragments of the literature and in the occasional glimpses of the doings of the most important centres, there is enough to explain to us the course which Greek history as a whole was taking, and the influences which were already producing wonders in literature, to be followed by wonders in art, and then by the solution (on a small scale) of every political problem the world has since encountered.

Greek world of seventh and sixth centuries B. C.

Before we enter upon that inquiry, we may best review quite briefly the condition of the Greek world in the seventh and early sixth centuries, in order to show the reader what we mean by the great contrasts which gave design and richness to the Hellenic unity. Beginning with the Peloponnesus (Morea) as the centre, both geographically and politically, of the Greek world, we have there the Dorian race dominant in the aristocracies of Corinth, Argos, Sparta, Messene. Elis,

*The recently discovered "Constitution of Athens," which is ascribed to Aristotle, and which has made such a stir in the literary world, was one of a set of 158 tracts, each of which described a distinct Hellenic polity, with the growth of its laws and institutions.

according to the legend, was occupied by Ætolians who crossed the narrow strait in company with the invading Dorians, but here also we find in old inscriptions a dialect akin to the Doric, and far removed from the Ionic speech. Each of these Dorian settlements except Corinth, which reaped the harvest of her two seas, was situate in a rich valley, which the Doric aristocracy parcelled out into lots for themselves, making the older population till the ground for them. At Sparta and Argos these invaders succeeded to the traditions of older and richer kingdoms. Argos swallowed up Mycenæ, Tiryns, and other ancient fortresses in the upper valley, and its early success in doing so, probably under the despot Pheidon, made a united power, for some time the strongest in the Peloponnesus.* We can see plainly enough in the Iliad that Argos was an important but new power, when that poem assumed its present shape. The whole kingdom of Diomede, his acts, his valour, are so to speak carved out of the possessions of Agamemnon of Mycenæ. Diomede is the young, enterprising, valorous chief who stands grievously in the light of the older and more widely recognized "king of men." But both the fifth and tenth books, which narrate Diomede's wonderful achievements, may be taken out without affecting the plot of the poem, the tenth being notoriously a later and independent lay. This old supremacy of Argos is expressed in the legend of the "Return of the Heracleidæ" by the assignment of Argos to the eldest son of Heracles, Temenus, from whom the ruling clan was called Temenid. But although there was a moment when Pheidon bid fair to assert this

Dorian settlements.

Temporary supremacy of Argos.

* The early distinction of Mycenæ and Tiryns I have inferred from internal evidence, though it does not agree with the reports of late Greek historians. The date of Pheidon I place, with E. Curtius, about 660 B. C., not 743, as usual in Greek histories.

supremacy over the whole peninsula, the power of Argos waned before the better organization of Sparta.

Here too, as the Iliad and Odyssey testify, there was an old and famous royalty, and the splendid "bee-hive" tomb found at Amyclæ (Vaphio) seems to show that its seat was somewhat south of the five villages afterwards so famous in history. Nor is this barrow an isolated testimony. The tomb-reliefs to be seen in the museum at Sparta, and the poetry of Alcman, composed for the Spartan nobility, show an early wealth and luxury widely different from the "black bread and broth" of Lycurgus. The site of their capital shows clearly enough what the conquerors had in view. In ordinary histories, indeed, the harsh training of their lawgivers and the rude plainness of their manners has somewhat reflected itself into their supposed home, and made men of books talk of the wild mountain home, the rugged glens of Taygetus, the stony and poor soil, as conditions of Spartan national character. This whole conception is false, as I learned when I went to look at the place.

Wealth and luxury of early Spartan nobility.

Barrenness and ruggedness of Sparta a myth.

The town was in holiday, and athletic sports were going on in commemoration of the establishment of Greek liberty. Crowds of fine tall men were in the very wide regular streets, and in the evening this new town vindicated its ancient title of "spacious." But the very first glance at the surroundings of the place was sufficient to correct in my mind a very widespread error, which we all obtain from reading the books of people who have never studied history on the spot. We imagine to ourselves the Spartans as hardy mountaineers, living in a rude alpine country, with sterile soil, the rude nurse of liberty. They may have been such when they arrived in prehistoric times from the mountains of Phocis, but a very short residence in Laconia must have changed them very much. The vale of Sparta is the richest and most fertile in Peloponnesus. The bounding chains of mountains are separated by a stretch, some twenty miles wide, of undulating hills

A visit to the fertile vale of Sparta.

and slopes, all now covered with vineyards, orange and lemon orchards, and comfortable homesteads or villages. The great chain on the west limits the vale by a definite line, but toward the east the hills that run toward Malea rise very gradually and with many delays beyond the arable grounds. The old Spartans therefore settled in the richest and best country available, and must from the very outset of their career have had better food, better climate, and hence much more luxury than their neighbours.

Evidence from art-remains.

We are led to the same conclusion by the art-remains which are now coming to light, and which are being collected in the well-built local museum of the town. They show us that there was an archaic school of sculpture, which produced votive and funeral reliefs, and therefore that the old Spartans were by no means so opposed to art as they have been represented in the histories. The poetry of Alcman, with its social and moral freedom, its suggestions of luxury and good living, shows what kind of literature the Spartan rulers thought fit to import and encourage in the city of Lycurgus. The whole sketch of Spartan society which we read in Plutarch's "Life" and other late authorities seems rather to smack of imaginary reconstruction on Doric principles than of historical reality. Contrasts there were, no doubt, between Dorians and Ionians, nay even between Spartan and Tarentine or Argive Dorians; but still Sparta was a rich and luxurious society, as is confessed on all hands where there is any mention of the ladies and their homes. We might as well infer from the rudeness of the dormitories in the College at Winchester or from the simplicity of an English man-of-war's mess, that our nation consisted of rude mountaineers living in the sternest simplicity.*

The pastoral charms of Arcadia a fable.

It is strange that no less a mistake, but in precisely the opposite direction, has been made about the neighbouring Arcadia. Here a land of real mountain ruggedness, of harsh climate and ungrateful soil—the home of bears and wolves—has been translated into a scene of perpetual spring, peopled with piping shepherds and scarce-clad nymphs. Both the Laconia of the book-

* "Rambles and Studies in Greece," Mahaffy, pages 381-3 (3d edition).

worm and the Arcadia of the euphuist are to be expelled from real history.

Conquest of Sparta by Dorians.

It seems indeed that most of the Dorian invaders found it a comparatively easy task either by conquest or accommodation to silence the older population and establish themselves as a ruling caste. In Messene there were even traditions that the invaders and natives became friends, and coalesced without difficulty. But in Sparta either the Achæans were stronger, or the invaders were themselves at variance, or there was some older stratum of population more difficult to deal with—in short, the conquest of Laconia was not only very gradual, but was not really effected till a great individual genius, known as Lycurgus, extended the discipline of war and the camp to the city, abolished the greater part of home education, and turned the whole dominant caste into a garrison which did nothing during peace but prepare for war. The higher branches of culture were deliberately neglected; the sentimental relations of the sexes were postponed to the mere practical production of strong youths to serve the state; the amusements of athletics (without competition for prizes) and of field sports filled up the moments of leisure from training; so that we have in the Spartans, as they emerge into history, the very model of an aristocracy which despises all occupations but war and sport, which looks with contempt upon trade and handicraft, which scorns the improvements of the age and the novelties of discovery, and hugs with pride old traditions, rude ways of life, primitive fashions.

Lycurgus.

Conservative aristocracy of Sparta.

It has been recently the fashion to diminish the credit which older historians, and which indeed the universal feeling of the Greeks, ascribed to Lycurgus. Grote in particular was never weary of carping at the Spartan

in comparison with the Athenian, and it may be assumed that American readers will rather sympathize with the great radical historian than with the exponents of conservative feeling. Yet as even now the American citizen, with all his bold independence and his republican traditions, can seldom divest himself of the veneration which every civilized man must feel for the splendour of ancient nobility, so every sort and condition of Greek radical, though he took care not to imitate the severities of Spartan discipline in his own state, yet looked with undisguised pride at Sparta, as the example which he could pit against the Persian noble or the Roman patrician, as a pure specimen of high and exclusive aristocracy. It was not Dorian in type; not another Dorian state, among the many that existed in Sicily, Magna Græcia, the Peloponnesus, and the Carian coast, shows the least similarity to it in its life. The only parallels were the very doubtful one of Crete, which failed in all the higher points of comparison, and the schemes, actual or theoretical, of such men as Pythagoras or Plato, whose attempts were plainly copies of the great ideas of Lycurgus.

Pride of Greeks in Spartan aristocracy.

This very wonderful result I cannot, with many German theorists, refer to a gradual growth, and to the shaping of circumstances only. A great individual must have used these conditions to carry out the inspiration of his genius. And yet all we know of him is so confused and uncertain that he would certainly have been relegated to the region of myth,* had not Plutarch's "Life" of him given us a distinct picture wherein ages of men have become familiar with the Greek conception of their greatest lawgiver. As

Plutarch's "Life of Lycurgus," the Spartan lawgiver.

* This has indeed been done by more than one sceptical German inquirer, but without attaining any large following.

Plutarch's "Lives" are accessible to all, I need not cite from his description. Modern criticism has nothing to add and very little to take away from his charming sketch. To furnish it throughout with notes of interrogation, to question each and every statement, is of course the cheapest of criticism. But hitherto we have made no discovery which can explain to us its strange anomalies.

Singularities of Spartan constitution, etc.

Why, for example, were there two kings, not one? And yet there is no hint in legend that the German theory of an early compromise is true, and that these kings represent the invaders and the older race respectively. They are uniformly stated to be of the same origin, and their genealogy was even traced back from son to father till they reached the hero Heracles. Why were the ceremonies which followed upon the death of either king so strange and unlike Hellenic customs that Herodotus turns aside to describe them and compare them to the funeral ceremonies of Asiatic barbarians?* Why, in spite of all this dignity of tradition, do we find these kings dominated by the five ephors, plain men chosen with no circumstance from among the average Spartans to control the whole state and even bring the kings to trial? Why did the luxury and refinement which we can find in the old tombs, and

Description of Spartan funeral ceremonies.

* Herodotus VI., Chap. LVIII.: "Such are the honours paid by the Spartans to their princes whilst alive; they have others after their decease. Messengers are sent to every part of Sparta to relate the event, whilst through the city the women beat on a caldron. At this signal one free-born person of each sex is compelled under very heavy penalties to disfigure themselves. The same ceremonies which the Lacedæmonians observe on the death of their kings are practised also by the barbarians of Asia; the greater part of whom, on a similar occasion, use these rites. When a king of Lacedæmon dies, a certain number of Lacedæmonians, independent of the Spartans, are obliged from all parts of Lacedæmon to attend his funeral. When these together with the Helots and Spartans, to the amount of several thousands, are assembled in one place, they begin, men and women, to beat their breasts; to make loud and dismal lamentations; always exclaiming of their last prince that he was of all preceding ones the best. If one of their kings dies in battle they make a representation of his person, and carry it to the place of interment on a bier richly adorned. When it is buried there is an interval of ten days from all business and amusement, with every public testimony of sorrow."

in the allusions of Alcman and other lyric poets, give way to the stern simplicity which became the ostentation of historical Sparta? Why did their love and patronage of art and literature give way to ignorance and rudeness? Why were their women free from the strict discipline of the men, free from the restraints of Attic or Ionian life, and yet for centuries not the worse for the wealth and unrestrained liberty in which they lived. Why in a society where sexual relations were as unsentimental as possible were the purity and dignity of the female sex so long and so honourably maintained?

Spartan progress toward simplicity.

Spartan women.

For all these problems the reader must seek his answer from the historian. The writer upon Greek civilization has only to state these contrasts to the rest of Hellenic life, as one of the elements of a culture richer and more various than any other in the Old World.

And what were the ideas which were peculiarly derived from this aristocratic society, and spread abroad through the Greek world? First of all, that dignity did not mean luxury, that aristocracy did not mean wealth, that upon black bread and broth could live a man whom even the tyrant, who added unlimited power to his luxury, looked upon with respect, if not with envy. Secondly, that the very point in which this tyrant, who put himself above all law, missed the mark, was that in which real nobility consisted — an unswerving obedience to the law, and loyal acceptance of its decrees, even were they harsh. Thirdly, all this conduct was based upon the postponement of each man's interest and pleasure to those of the state, of the common weal, of the greatness of his country. In almost every Greek state the theory prevailed that the individual had no rights against the state; in none was this theory so loyally and unreservedly carried out as among the Spar-

Spartan high ideal of conduct and patriotism.

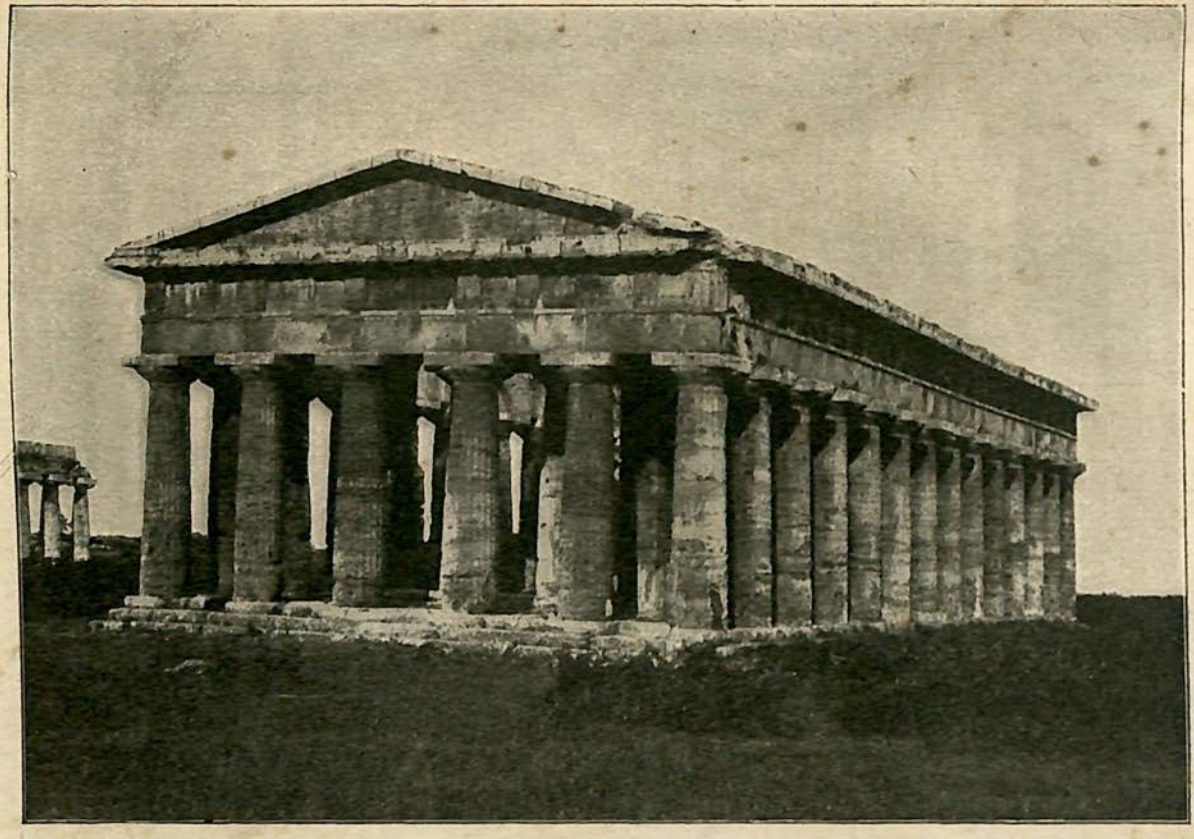
tans, who gloried in sacrificing everything — property, wife, children, comfort — for the greatness and glory of their state. This is that ideal of patriotism which has led indeed to not a few grave consequences, to not a few signal injustices, to many terrible mistakes, but still it is a noble feeling, and one which raises men from the level of the savage or the cynic to something loftier and purer, to something deserving of immortality.

Conditions of culture in rest of Greece.

What were the conditions of culture in the other states of Greece and Asia Minor, whose material advance was far greater than that of Sparta? We know very little indeed of social Athens till we come to Solon and Pisistratus, but we can infer something from the political changes which are chronicled in Plutarch's "Life of Theseus," in Aristotle's "Constitution of Athens," and in the allusions of other authors. We know that there, too, there was a landed aristocracy, but that the poor people were not of a different or conquered race. For the Attic people always boasted that they were *autochthonous*, that is, native to the soil, which proves at all events that all recollection of their advent, or of the displacement of an older population, was gone. The landed aristocracy seem to have lived hospitably, like feudal lords, in the country, as is told of the elder Miltiades, and not without luxury. Thucydides says that it was only recently, that is in the fifth century, that they had given up wearing the flowing Ionian robes, and the tettix (cicada) of gold in their hair. The seventeen mutilated goddesses, or perhaps rather princesses, found under the rubble gathered from the Persian fury on the Acropolis, are all dressed most elaborately, and in divers colours, with their hair carefully plaited; and the rich effects which still remain show how elaborate was the taste of that early day. The deep expression

Athens.

Early Attic art.



TEMPLE AT PÆSTUM. (See page 131.)

which more perfect artists put into the face and form was still wanting to these stiff and ungainly figures, with their stereotyped smile, but the taste for luxury and the splendour of the outward appointments are unmistakably there. We know the same thing of the early Attic architecture. Whether the material of a temple was marble or not, it was covered with rich colours, and if possible with gilded ornaments, so that the whole modern notion of the purity of white marble, and its perfection as a material for sculpture and for architecture, was almost foreign to the Greeks. The Attic ideal of splendour in a statue was to have it *chryselephantine*, gilded, with the exposed parts of the figure in ivory.

No material evidence extant for Athenian home life.

We have unfortunately no closer knowledge of their home life as to its material aspect, as we have, from the excavated palaces, of the Mycenæan age. The houses of the Attic nobles, nay, even of Solon and Pisistratus, have wholly vanished, nor do I suppose that even if the latter dwelt in the Acropolis, as some tyrants did for safety's sake in other cities, his residence was of any real splendour. All we can say about the Pisistratids is that they carried out great works for the public adornment of their city.

Public works.

It is but yesterday that Dr. Dörpfeld discovered how they had led great underground conduits from some miles higher up the Ilissus round the Acropolis to the spot where they made the great public fountain with its nine mouths, the *Enneakrounus*, which was still used for all solemn purposes in Thucydides's day. We know too that very similar work was carried out by their contemporary Polykrates of Samos, whereby an engineer called Eupalinos pierced a mountain to supply the city with water. This conduit has also been discovered (by Dr. Fabricius), and so ample was the

supply of labour that over the actual water conduit was set a second to enable the water course to be inspected and cleaned.

Tyrants the benefactors of Greece from material point of view.

These isolated cases prove what I have long held and argued in opposition to the too political Grote, that the so-called tyrants were materially the benefactors of Hellenedom. They commanded the whole means of their respective cities; they could employ adequate slave labour; they were united through Greece, Italy, and Asia Minor in a certain brotherhood of irresponsibility, and kept in such correspondence with each other that artists and poets passed from one to the other, and so spread the knowledge of luxuries and letters among people highly susceptible to all progress, but as yet far behind Egyptians and Babylonians and Assyrians in the comforts of life. Yet in two respects they were already superior: first, they had already obtained a wholly different view of politics; they had learned to assert the rights of the free men; they had learned to settle things by public discussion; and if the rich were still the masters of the poor, and claimed the privileges of ancient descent or wealth, it only required the brief domination of a single tyrant who set himself over the whole population and ruled by force of arms to depress these aristocrats to the same level and to the same rights as the rest of the people. Hence the intense hatred of the aristocratic classes to the tyrants; hence, through aristocratic influences, the perpetual tirades we find against tyrants in Greek literature. For when the tyrant was assassinated his tyranny still lived; the upper classes had lost their advantage and never regained it. Their sentimental influence was shaken or abolished; they had served the despot like the rest of the citizens; they had suffered violence or wrong at his

Athenians in advance of Egyptians, etc., in politics.

hands without redress like the meanest peasant; the great lord had lost his *droits de seigneur*, and with them his prestige, forever. This was the political gain.

Advance in letters.

Secondly, we have a wonderful advance in letters; we have even in the few fragments now extant clear evidence that the poets of that early day were as accomplished artists, aye and as keen thinkers, as Wordsworth and Tennyson. No elaboration of style, no subtlety of form was unknown to them. The wonderful

Archilochus the earliest lyric poet.

thing is that the earliest of these lyric poets, Archilochus, is as perfectly developed as any of them in metre and in trenchant style, as developed, indeed, as Heinrich Heine in our own century. We have remaining of him only isolated lines, and in them the aptness of the metre and the trenchant vigour of the expression cannot survive in any translation. The American public who want to appreciate such things must sit down and learn Greek, and that will cost them time. But though we have of Archilochus such scanty remains, they enable us perfectly to accept the unanimous verdict of the later Greek critics, who still possessed him, and who agreed to class him second to Homer only.

Greek lyric poets.

Yet it was indeed difficult to say who was greatest in that wondrous galaxy of poets that filled the seventh and sixth centuries, and sang in all Greek lands from Sicily to Sardis, from Corcyra to Cyrene—Alcæus, Sappho, Anacreon, Ibycus, Stesichorus, Simonides, Pindar, not to mention the lower forms, the satires of the elder Simonides and of Hipponax, and hosts of lesser names that have left but a trace upon the stream of time. The distinctions and difference of these men's work are the affair of the historian of Greek literature. I need only here remind the reader that if some of them devoted themselves to choral hymns and odes to the gods, most

of them had stripped off theology as too abstract and unreal, and spoke the passion of their souls, love, hatred, revenge, despair, triumph, jealousy, grief, all the joys and sorrows of a stormy life.

Alcæus and Sappho.

Of these Alcæus and Sappho, imitated afar off by Horace, the Roman Tom Moore, are most familiar to us. The twenty or thirty lines surviving of each, which show us the method of the imitation, are indeed of the first quality, but what are they compared to what we have lost? Would that the sands of Egypt might yet deliver up to us some further remnants of this priceless literature! These lyric poets were indeed almost all aristocrats, meaning by that term men of the privileged classes, who despised the mob, but they were exiled in political troubles, invited abroad to courts, tempted to embark in traffic, and so attained a wide knowledge of the world, and an acquaintance with men and manners.

As I have already said repeatedly, these poems are no more translatable into English than Gray or Burns are into French. But perhaps the American reader will nevertheless insist that he should have some far-off inkling of their nature, so I add here a specimen or two. The best notion, however, he can now get of Sappho or Alcæus is from the finest lyrics of Horace, who had these poets before him, and copied not only the metres, but often the very expressions in the Greek originals.

Translation of Sappho.

SAPPHO.

I.

VENUS, bright goddess of the skies,
To whom unnumber'd temples rise,
Jove's daughter fair, whose wily arts
Delude fond lovers of their hearts;
O! listen gracious to my prayer,
And free my mind from anxious care.

If e'er you heard my ardent vow,
Propitious goddess, hear me now!
And oft my ardent vow you've heard,
By Cupid's friendly aid preferr'd,
Oft left the golden courts of Jove,
To listen to my tales of love.

The radiant car your sparrows drew;
You gave the word, and swift they flew,
Through liquid air they wing'd their way,
I saw their quivering pinions play;
To my plain roof they bore their queen,
Of aspect mild, and look serene.

Soon as you came, by your command,
Back flew the wanton feathered band,
Then, with a sweet enchanting look,
Divinely smiling, thus you spoke:
"Why didst thou call me to thy cell?
Tell me, my gentle Sappho, tell.

"What healing medicine shall I find
To cure thy love-distemper'd mind?
Say, shall I lend thee all my charms,
To win young Phaon to thy arms?
Or does some other swain subdue
Thy heart? my Sappho, tell me, who?

"Though now, averse, thy charms he slight,
He soon shall view thee with delight;
Though now he scorns thy gifts to take,
He soon to thee shall offerings make;
Though now thy beauties fail to move,
He soon shall melt with equal love."

Once more, O Venus, hear my prayer,
And ease my mind of anxious care;
Again vouchsafe to be my guest,
And calm this tempest in my breast!
To thee, bright queen, my vows aspire;
O grant me all my heart's desire:

II.

MORE happy than the gods is he
Who, soft reclining, sits by thee ;
His ears thy pleasing talk beguiles,
His eyes thy sweetly-dimpled smiles.

This, this, alas ! alarm'd my breast,
And robb'd me of my golden rest :
While gazing on thy charms I hung,
My voice died faltering on my tongue.

With subtle flames my bosom glows,
Quick through each vein the poison flows :
Dark dimming mists my eyes surround ;
My ears with hollow murmurs sound.

My limbs with dewy chillness freeze,
On my whole frame pale tremblings seize,
And losing colour, sense, and breath,
I seem quite languishing in death.*

Pindar.

The last of the series is to us the best known, because large portions of his works have survived. But he lived on the threshold of a new epoch ; he even lived to see the great national struggle which remodelled all Greek politics and Greek society, yet he was of the old, and belonged to the past ; not only the city (Thebes) to which he belonged, but the man himself was unable to appreciate the new era. The modern reader finds him now, as the Roman reader did, so elaborate and artificial that his true merits are not easily to be estimated. No great poet is bound to be obvious or even easy ; but he is only condoned his obscurity because the ideas he grasps, or endeavours to grasp, are vast and beyond our clear vision. His case is without excuse, if, as Mr.

His elaboration and artificiality.

* These versions lose all the transcendent beauty of expression in the original. But one thing they cannot change. I will call it the modern flavour of this poetry. In no respect has the version changed or modified this striking feature. Let it be remembered that Sappho lived more than five centuries before the Christian era.

George Meredith does nowadays, he labours to envelop every-day platitudes in the contorted grammar or the inverted diction which demands careful analysis, and seeks to cheat the reader into a belief that what is made difficult of comprehension is therefore well worth being understood. Pindar, to my mind, is often guilty of this fault. His elaborate metre and rich vocabulary often conceal ideas obvious and tame enough when stated in simple words. But his duty was to be stately, to produce an effect by the music and the march of his processional hymns, to affect men's minds by great words, set in a noble framework of rhythm and of song, and so we may lay aside our criticism and take him as a man not only successful in doing what he attempted, but even in delighting modern schoolmasters with the difficulties of his interpretation, and the satisfaction of thinking that his perfections are only known to those who have mastered all the technicalities of his art.

Pindar's obscurity.

We are rather concerned with hearing from him what we can concerning the society in which he lived. He does not say much about the present. He is concerned chiefly in glorifying the present by means of the past. The city that he praises is great because of its ancient splendours, and because it was the home of old gods and heroes. The individual that he praises is splendid because he has shown by his prowess the value of high descent, and the glorious side of atavism. Therefore, as compared with the realism of many of the lyric poets such as Archilochus, he represents the ideal side, the glories of legend and tradition, the greatness and value of the past. The one fact that a poet with this dominant feature should have been employed by all manner of Greeks to compose triumphal odes, shows not only that there was a solidarity of tastes and interests among the

Pindar's glorification of the past.

His idealism.

Greeks, but also that the better classes already stood on a very high level of culture. The poems are all difficult, elaborate, to some extent unreal; the other great poet of this day, Simonides, was, so far as we can tell, easy and clear; yet there was room for both in the affections of the public. But then Pindar celebrated Olympic victories at solemn feasts, when the pomp of a procession suggested splendour and gorgeous imagery. Simonides is best known by his epitaphs, where such qualities were out of place. However pompous even the *threnoi* of Pindar, when the rich man's burial was conducted with ceremony, the words that marked the resting place of the warrior, the maiden, and the sage needed but terseness and the pathos of simplicity. So it is that while Pindar is now intensely ancient—I feel sure he seemed so to the men of the next century*—Simonides might have written to-day. Take, for example, his famous lament of Danæ, when shut up with her infant and sent adrift upon the sea:

Pindar contrasted with Simonides.

Modernness of Simonides.

When rude around the high-wrought ark
The tempests raged, the waters dark
Around the mother tossed and swelled;
With not unmoistened cheek, she held
Her Perseus in her arms, and said:
"What sorrows bow this hapless head!
Thou sleep'st the while, thy gentle breast
Is heaving in unbroken rest;
In this our dark unjoyous home,
Clamped with the rugged brass, the gloom
Scarce broken by the doubtful light
That gleams from yon dim fires of night.
But thou, unwet thy clustering hair,
Heed'st not the billows raging wild,

* The poet Cratinus, living sixty years later, says in an extant fragment th Pindar was already consigned to silence, owing to the want of taste of t public. Had he been great enough, such a result would not have ensue But he wrote for a special society, not for all time.

The moanings of the bitter air,
Wrapt in thy purple robe, my beauteous child!
Oh, seemed this peril perilous to thee
How sadly to my words of fear
Wouldst thou bend down thy listening ear!
But now, sleep on, my child! Sleep thou, wide sea!
Sleep, my unutterable agony!
Or if my rash intemperate zeal offend,
For my child's sake, my father, pardon me!" *

Or this ode to the vine:

Ode to the vine.

MOTHER of purple grapes, soul-soothing vine,
Whose verdant boughs their graceful tendrils twine;
Still round this urn, with youth unfailing, bloom,
The gentle slope of old Anacreon's tomb.
For so the unmixed-goblet-loving sire,
Touching the live-long night his amorous lyre
Even low in earth, upon his brows shall wear
The ruddy clustering crowns thy branches bear.
Where, though still fall the sweetest dews, the song
Distilled more sweetly from that old man's tongue.†

I don't know that it would be fair to present Pindar similarly in an English dress. Those who cannot read him in the original must imagine him the Gray of Greek poetry, but more complex and elaborate than Gray. He spoke of course only to the upper classes, but yet rather to the wealthy upper classes than those of the purest blood. For Sparta he wrote nothing, for Athens almost nothing. Rich Sicilian tyrants, and the rich mercantile men of Ægina, Cyrene, and other such places, possessed more ambition to shine as the purest of the race, and more means to pay the costly artist. We may then infer that at the Olympic and other public games, these politically inferior states claimed their full share of importance, and took their places among

Pindar the poet of the aristocracy.

* Milman, page 193.
† Milman, page 194.

the democracy of Greek polities. We know that at Olympia and at Delphi cities insignificant in history had the most splendid of those treasure-houses, in which the offerings of the state and its citizens were displayed. It is but recently, for example, that the French archæologists have discovered the treasury of the Siphnians* at Delphi, which was more splendid than any of the rest. But then there had been gold mines at Siphnos, and while they lasted the island was very wealthy.

The reputation of Bœotia for stupidity undeserved.

Pindar dwelt in Thebes, which was rather despised among its neighbours for want of culture, and noted for rich living; yet, as is always the case with great Greek poets, we can trace no inferiority, no want of training, in this Bœotian bard. We begin to doubt whether the land which produced Hesiod, Pindar, Corinna, Epaminondas, Pelopidas, and Plutarch, was not maligned by the rest of Greece, just as the ass and the goose, which are among the most intelligent of domesticated creatures, have been universally, and yet most falsely, set down as embodiments of stupidity. But in a profession such as his, which brought him into connection with every city in Greece, his home was really of little importance. He was the poet laureate of all Hellenic lands, replacing with his peculiar art, and with those choral processions and dances accompanied by music and poetry, the old Homeric bard, who wandered from court to court, alone, and depending upon his simple cithara to aid his declamation. But Pindar was nothing if not gorgeous. In complexity of metre, in the elaborate stateliness of the performance, possibly in the composition of the music, which was as essentially part of his work as the text, this lyrical symphonist, like Wagner in our own day, combined many arts in such a

Pindar's gorgeousness.

*Siphnos was an obscure little island in the Ægean.

way as to produce a wonderful effect, and one which could not be imitated by better men, or with lesser means.

The philosophic and reflective poetry of Solon, etc.

In great contrast to this climax of choric composition are the simple iambics and elegiacs of the more philosophical and reflective poets, of whom the wise Solon, living nearly a century earlier than Pindar, is the most prominent example. We shall come presently to his political side, but his poetry is not less remarkable than that of Pindar, and for the very opposite qualities, simplicity and directness, an utter absence of splendour, but a great depth and breadth of good sense, and of that wisdom which raised him to rank among the Seven Sages of early Greece. It is again to the inestimable Plutarch, whose "Lives" should be under the hand of every one that reads this book, that we owe a lively picture of Solon and his times. But his many quotations from the poet-statesman we now know to have been taken from Aristotle's "Constitution of Athens," where we have recently found them in somewhat fuller form. These fragments, taken from what we may call his "Soliloquies," the volume by which he was best known, are most striking from their *modern* tone, their plain and clear way of looking at men and things.

Translation of Solon.

SOLON.

NE'ER shall our city fall by doom of Jove,
Or sentence of the immortal powers above.
So strong the high-born ruler of the land,
Pallas Athene, lifts her guardian hand,
But thine own sons, O Athens, are thy fate,
And, slaves to gain, destroy the unconquered state.
Fierce demagogues unjust, o'er whom shall flow,
For their dark crimes, a bitter tale of woe;
Whose pampered wills brook no restraint, nor rest,
Enjoying, with calm hearts, good fortune's feast.*

*Milman, page 197.

Very probably the wisdom which seems to us in the nineteenth century tolerably obvious, was not quite so much so six hundred years before Christ; but such reflections have their weight at all times, when uttered by a mind which has put them into practical execution. The reform of the laws of Athens by Solon was not the first such attempt in that city. The constitution had been already undergoing wise modifications, first apparent when Theseus had gathered most of Attica into one state at Athens; then when the royalty had given way to temporary magistrates (687 B. C.); then when the criminal code of Draco had shown that manslaughter was an offence not only against the clan of the victim but against the community. But these changes were not without many counterbalancing disturbances, and so it was certainly the intolerable state of internal discord at Athens which induced the majority to call upon the popular poet who had done at Athens for the war against Megara what Tyrtæus had done at Sparta for that against Messene, to put an end to the confusion, and save the state. I may mention in passing that one of the oldest fragments of actual legislation extant is the broken slab which tells of the arrangements for the settlers sent to Salamis after Solon's victory.*

Political reforms at Athens previous to Solon.

The obvious part for Solon to play was that of *tyrant*, that is to say of irresponsible ruler, who got a body-guard from his fellow-citizens to protect him, and then turned it into a permanent means of coercing his rivals and opponents. Such things had been done a hundred times in Greece, and we still read in Solon's confessions how his friends sneered at him as an unambitious fool for

Solon's refusal to be a tyrant.

*This was found three or four years ago, during the excavations on the Acropolis, where the rubbish which had been used to make a new and larger platform for building, and which consisted of the ruins left by the Persians, has yielded many valuable relics to modern research.

not seizing the opportunity. But Solon was too morally pure, too politically simple, to adopt this unscrupulous, but practical course. He made his laws, and left them without adequate sanction. There was no power in the hands of the majority to secure their enforcement. So it required the moderate and wise tyranny of Pisistratus (560–510 B. C.) to carry out, if not all, at least the majority of Solon's laws, and in any case to put down the most crying abuse of that day—the oppression of the poor by the rich, of the peasant by the noble.

Tyranny of Pisistratus.

Solon, and indeed Pisistratus also, was far removed from the vain notion of universal suffrage, or from putting the life and property of the propertied classes into the power of the hungry masses. The whole of Solon's arrangements were based on the principle that wealth was not only a respectable thing in an individual but a guarantee of his conduct to the state. Democracy in one sense was not only unknown to him, but he would have turned from it in horror. For no Greek that ever lived believed in the masses, in the worth of slaves and barbarians, in the wisdom of any but educated men.

Solon not a democrat.

But as the remedying of injustice was the main feature of Solon's policy, so also he shows the reasonable moderation of a philosopher, not sweeping away wh was old and respectable, not breaking with tradition lik a vulgar radical, but endeavouring to make evil out good, history out of change, progress out of the gre fermentation which threatened to explode the stat The poems of Solon as we have them express all the moderate and wise principles, nor do I know that the are any fragments of the period which prove more thoroughly what I always insist on as the modernness of Greek civilization. If Solon were to rise from the dead now, he would accommodate himself in a few days to the

Solon the type of the moderate reformer of to-day.

material changes in civilized life; the method of thinking, the logic employed in arguments, he would not find in any way strange. A baron or a monk from the Middle Ages would be at far greater loss to find his footing or to follow the thoughts of men.

But if there be still a touch of antiquity about Solon, we shall find it completely gone among those most developed of literary men, the Attic historians and orators.

Greek tyrants.

As Solon and Lycurgus are our greatest specimens of early lawgivers, so Periander and Pisistratus are of the early despots or tyrants, who contributed so much to breaking down the boundaries between nobles and peasants in their respective states, and who also disseminated art and literature by their enlightened patronage. We hear terrible things about these tyrants from Greek prose writers. Herodotus, Xenophon, Plato, and many others paint the horrors of their acts, and the hideous vices that poison their souls and ruin their own happiness. And yet from the earliest to the latest epochs of Greek history, tyrants are a well-known class, ruling many cities all through the Greek world and individually respected and esteemed, though they belong to this abominable order. The fact is that the awful pictures of the tyrant's soul * and of his doings are either theoretical sketches of what happens to ambitious men when all restraints are removed, or else aristocratic lamentations over the fall of the nobility and the protection which these men accorded to the masses. For to the tyrant the support of the people was necessary against the revenge, the plots, the slander, of the aristocracy which he had coerced and subdued, and from whose outrages he protected many a humble home. The whole of the

Picture of the tyrant in literature not to be trusted.

* The most celebrated is probably that in the ninth book of Plato's "Republic," which can be read in Mr. Jowett's excellent translation.

anti-despotic literature comes from aristocrats, from the men who told Solon what a fool he was to refrain from seizing this sort of power, and gives us pictures of the worst sort of despot, avoiding all citation of the better instances. Such men as Periander and Pisistratus were certainly capable of high-handed proceedings; they did not scruple to take the life of an opponent; they raised money when they wanted it by requisitions which may have been often oppressive. But the commerce of Corinth first developed into greatness under Periander; the art of Athens grew under Pisistratus, and if we seek a parallel case to illustrate their motives in our own century, we shall choose Mehemet Ali, the first great viceroy of Egypt, who rose from the ranks by his courage and his astuteness, got rid of a turbulent, unjust, violent military aristocracy (the Mamelukes) by a great massacre, and then brought his country out of the savagery of Turkish mediævalism into the path of European progress.* But for Mehemet Ali, Egypt would now be in the condition of Armenia or Syria, without proper laws or roads, or trade or contact with the western world. This great man had indeed schemes of conquest which were only checked by the interference of all Europe, but his internal management of Egypt was a wonderful advance upon the Mamelukes. Life and property were safe; travellers could wander at their ease from Cairo to Khartoum; agriculture and trade increased tenfold, and the occasional acts of high-handed justice which swept away a detected criminal, or disgraced a corrupt official, were probably far more efficient in teaching morals to such a people than the more cumbrous proceedings of constitutional authorities.

The function of the tyrant in Greece.

Modern parallel of Mehemet Ali.

* *Cf.* an article on this remarkable man and his policy by the well-known diplomatist, Count Benedetti, in *Revue des Deux Mondes* for August 1, 1895.

The early Greek tyrants were indeed very seldom upstarts like Mehemet Ali, Polykrates of Samos, or like Agathocles of Syracuse, so prominent in the days of the early successors of Alexander. They were mostly nobles who saw a new career in becoming the champions of the people. It is for this cause that most of them had not only a desire to promote art, but good taste in doing so. A credible though not accredited tradition ascribes to Pisistratus the very wise official steps to save and propagate the text of the Homeric poems, by appointing a literary commission to do it. Another tradition tells us that he sought to revive in the Athenians, who were deserting the country to pursue party politics in the capital, the taste for country life, by promoting the feasts of Dionysus, and with them the commencement of that tragedy which soon became the peerless glory of Attic literature. For it was not the grandiloquence of Pindar and the athletic feasts that tyrants loved, seeing that enemies and malcontents could use them as a cloak for dangerous plots, but the laughter and gaiety of those rude village festivities, which associated with the harvest and the vintage the worship of rustic deities, and the dancing of choruses very different from the stately pomp of the Olympic festival.

Encouragement by the tyrants of art and country life.

Influence of Pisistratus on Athenians.

As if to show us the ineradicable variety which marks every epoch of early Greek life, we have at the same period a wholly different society and a wholly different literature in those rich and brilliant cities of Asia Minor, of which the west coast was for many a day more Greek than the Greeks themselves. It is from this focus of culture that come the lyric poets, whom *we* understand, seeing that they were capable of imitation by Romans and moderns and that they expressed individual passion, which is like in all ages, as opposed to public or

The lyric poets of Asia Minor.

religious interests, which vary with the society and the creed of every century. Alcæus, Sappho, Anacreon, and their rivals dwelt both in free cities and at the courts of tyrants. They were engaged in political strife at home, often in adventures abroad, and these lyric outbursts tell us of the wild pleasures and poignant griefs of high, stormy, sensitive minds, trained to a perfect power of expression, and with the most perfect canons of taste. We may well wonder how these brilliant poets, without any models outside their own language, or in any century antecedent to Homer, should have developed such perfect literary form. It is perhaps only approached by the literary excellence of much of the Old Testament, which even in pale translation maintains its preëminence above most literary developments of that kind among men. So that if we can deliberately maintain that the extant fragments of Alcæus and Sappho are as perfect as the poems of Tennyson—the greatest master of poetical form in our own generation—we are stating a strange fact, but one not without analogies, or incredible to any student of history.

Their startling perfection of literary form.

The recognition of this extraordinary perfection in the Greek lyric poetry of the sixth century B. C. is, however, of great importance beyond the history of literature. It makes us infer, perhaps not over safely, that in the sister arts men could not tolerate ugliness and absence of clear design. The fine arts do not submit to any such law of regularity, and as there is no doubt that contemporary statues of these poets, if such there were, would be as stiff, awkward, and conventional as the archaic statues of gods found at the ancient Temple of Miletus, so we may be sure that the music to which they sang their hymns and secular poems would seem to us akin to the music of barbaric orientals, if not of savages.

The significance of this literary perfection for other arts.

But we may, I think, conclude reasonably that in two branches of human improvement this perfection of expression must have given great help, or perhaps been the symptom of a great advance.

Influence of the poets on Greek thought and politics.

It is certain that what we call politics, or diplomacy, the settlement of questions of public interest by discussion, the endeavour to persuade by argument and not to coerce by force, the satisfaction at being convinced and not bullied in a dispute—all this rational procedure is not possible without a power of language in the speaker, a power of comprehension in the hearer, which imply a long and considerable training. It was through their poets that the Greeks got this training, and we know that the power of expression, originally developed by the power of thinking, reacts upon it, and that the rising generation is educated by learning the language which its ancestors have laboured out by slow degrees. So, therefore, the active and various political movements which took place in Hellenic lands in the following century could hardly have arisen so soon, were it not for the intellectual training of the race through their poets.

Close relation of early Greek poetry and philosophy.

The same conclusion may be drawn regarding philosophy. Deeper thinking concerning the origin of things, the creation of the world, its purpose and its destiny, cannot be carried on without a mastery of abstract terms, and a power of making careful distinctions. There is wanting too, for any reasonable cosmic philosophy, a lofty imagination, which can grasp spiritual conceptions and deal with the unseen. The first steps in this direction were taken by the so-called Seven Wise Men of Greece, who were all philosophical poets, clothing their speculation in that form of writing which had then attained perfection. How important philosophy was in the texture of Hellenic culture will be obvious to

Philosophy a spiritual necessity to the Greeks.

the modern reader if he reflects that this was the only avenue open to the Greeks whereby the gross and primitive conceptions of their popular creeds could be purified and refined into a reasonable and spiritual faith. They had no inspired teacher to tell them of a revelation from God, they had no sacred book dictated by the Spirit of God. They were therefore compelled to find their way into moral and spiritual truth by "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," examining the mythical accounts of the world's origin by their reason, examining the Homeric accounts of the powers that rule the world by the test of their own moral sense.

Physical speculations preceded moral.

It is not a little remarkable that in the century of which we are speaking *moral* speculations had not yet commenced. Socrates had not yet arisen to bring down philosophy from the skies into the life of man. The earliest Ionic philosophers sought to discover the unity that underlies the many phenomena of nature, the common substance from which all had arisen, the universal laws of proportion which changed Chaos into Cosmos—the world "that was without form and void" into "the heavens that declare the glory of God, and the firmament that showeth his handiwork." And as they all felt that the universe was really of uniform substance, though appearing in myriad variety, so they soon reached the philosophic truth that the phenomenal is not the real, that all things are not as they seem, that *Being* or essence is distinct from its qualities; eternal and immutable as opposed to the fleeting and the changeable. Nor were they far from the greater discovery that the unseen is greater than the visible, that a secret Power dominates the order of the world, if not that this Power *is* the real world.

Truths attained by Ionic philosophers.

So we come within sight of that pantheism which so constantly recurs in all Greek philosophy, and which, whatever its weakness, is surely a far nobler and purer creed than the vulgar polytheism preached by Homer and Hesiod. Both, however, coexisted for a long while, the deeper and more difficult dogma fascinating keen minds by its very difficulty and obscurity, the more trivial suiting itself in many respects to the requirements of art and the recreations of the people. The popular creed, in spite of its often wicked and immoral gods, was a happy religion, not dealing much in supernatural terrors, but identifying feasts and their pleasures with the worship of the deities. Our religion tends so strongly to dissociate us from worldly pleasures that we have some difficulty in grasping the position of the Greeks, even the serious Greeks, on this point. When we hear that exuberant joy, even including dissolute pleasures, was included in the religious celebrations of these people, we are disposed to deny to them all proper sense of spiritual things. But this is only our Semitic seriousness, which has come in with the Jewish teachers of the Christian religion. We admit and even extol the joys of religion, though we but rarely feel them. In the infancy of European civilization it was far different; the joys of Greek religion were many and intense, its sadness and solemnity were long kept in the background.

Coexistence of pantheism and polytheism.

The joyousness of Greek religion.

Semitic seriousness of religion of to-day.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PASSAGE FROM SPORADIC TO SYSTEMATIC CULTURE. THE GREAT STRUGGLE WITH THE EAST.

Danger to Greeks from lack of concentration and naval power.

THE philosophic observer who examined the nature and extent of the civilization which we have sketched so far, in the middle of the sixth century, might have noted the following peculiarities and consequent dangers in its brilliant life. Its expansiveness was wonderful. During the previous one hundred and fifty years it had thrown out offshoots westward to the coasts of Italy and Sicily, even to Marseilles and the now Provençal coast, southward to the rich upland about Cyrene; eastward both on the south and the north coasts of Asia Minor into the recesses of the Syrian and Pontic seas, northward through the Hellespont to the Crimea. But the whole of this vast dissemination was no empire; for it possessed no combined naval power; it made no attempt to conquer the adjoining continents. On islands, therefore, and peninsulas the Greek settlers in their cities were only safe until a naval power arose which could command the sea; on coasts the Greeks must trust to conventions with the inland nations, or the strength of their fortifications, to defend them from raid or conquest by the barbarians of the interior.

Greek mercantile cities at the mercy of natives of the interior.

The case of Byzantium was typical of the whole question. The people of Megara chose the matchless site now occupied by Constantinople, from which they commanded the trade of the Black Sea, as well as that which came from the Ægean; but all their gifts, their

conventions, their arms, were unable to save them from the constant raids of their Thracian neighbours, who pounced upon their crops, levied blackmail upon their citizens, and so impeded their peace and security for centuries that it was not till a continental power arose which could subdue and civilize the whole population of the interior, that the city attained the importance to which it was entitled from its wonderful position. Polybius explains all this to us at length in the second century before Christ; the same things were true for centuries before, whenever the barbarians combined under a capable leader, or the Greek cities were weakened by internal discord. The wealth of maritime cities which have a great carrying trade is indeed sufficient to obtain for them armies of mercenaries; but it is a matter of consistent human experience that forces of natives, it may be pastoral savages, it may be agricultural yeomen, will in the long run defeat all the resources of mercantile cities. The fact then that the outlying Greeks only occupied coasts, and did not attempt any other than trade relations with the natives of foreign lands, made it certain that they would fall a prey to the continental powers which might arise in these lands.

Precarious existence of Byzantium.

The only safety against such a result would have lain in the close confederation of the Hellenic cities and an honest effort to help each member, according as it was subject to attack. How could this be expected from these cities founded by jealous rivals, each profiting at once from the troubles or the downfall of a neighbour and hating its prosperity? It was much more likely that Byzantium, for example, would connive at, or even encourage the Asiatic Thracians attacking Chalcedon over against them on the Bosphorus, than send that city its aid when hard pressed by its barbaric neighbours.

Confederation prevented by commercial jealousies.

Commercial jealousies always show the mean side of human nature, and jealousy, generally speaking, was an ingrained vice of the Greeks from the earliest to the present day.

Loss of Greek liberty the inevitable result.

The future might therefore almost have been foretold. As the land was widest and deepest behind the eastern Greeks, they were the first to lose their liberties; then came the turn of the Italiot cities, crushed by the Lucanians and Samnites of the Calabrian Mountains, and then by the Romans. Ultimately came the turn of Greece itself. After it had been shown by intestine wars that even within this area the yeoman was superior to the sailor, however sustained by his commercial resources, the whole of Greece fell under the first great organization of the northern mainland, when Philip II. of Macedon combined the infantry of his mountaineers with the cavalry of Thessaly to subdue the coasts and islands and small territories of the primary Greek cities.

The various causes that accelerated or retarded this consummation are generally obvious enough, and will appear in the sequel. The most favourable area for such a spreading of colonies as the Greek was undoubtedly

The case of Sicily.

Sicily, an island large enough to hold a great population, and yet not too vast for the coast cities to dominate it. But here also the jealousies between the various cities, which seldom permitted the Greek population to put forth its strength, were supported by the dangerous interference of Carthage, whose consistent policy it was to prevent any united power in the island.

Relation of Greek cities of Asia Minor to eastern powers and civilization.

We now revert to the first and most signal case, that of the Greek cities on the Asiatic coast, lying upon the borders of a great continent, with a large population open to their trade, but also the seat of great civilized powers, at first too far away east to cause alarm,

gradually extending their sway over the western outwork of Asia. The same causes which made these eastern powers a danger made the prosperity of the Asiatic Greeks; they also caused the coming servitude to be more tolerable, and not utterly destructive of Greek culture. For the kingdoms of Mesopotamia were from a very early age highly civilized; their requirements were therefore many; their luxuries varied; the Lydians and the Hittites had borrowed from them their culture, and so Miletus, Ephesus, Smyrna, had a market vastly wider and greater than those of any other Greeks. Hence the early prominence and true greatness of these settlements.

Persian domination a blight on the Greek genius.

Nor was it the policy either of Lydians or Persians to destroy the wealth of these cities; they only demanded obedience and tribute; yet however moderate their demands, the loss of independence and of political liberty seems to have marred the bloom and blighted the growth of Greek genius. The whole greatness of these cities is before the Persian domination; they then took the lead of Athens, Thebes, and Sparta. After that time, they remained indeed populous, at times very wealthy, in Roman days more civilized and important than most cities in Hellas, but never higher than the second rank in the estimation of men.

Modern parallel of Canada.

A political difference often produces social and intellectual differences far greater than one could expect. Thus the continued control of England over Canada, while the States attained their complete liberty in the War of Independence, produced such a stay in the energy of that country that competent observers in former years have noticed along the immense frontier the most striking contrasts: to the south activity, business, development; to the north dulness, inactivity, list-

lessness, as if the very practice of political liberties had stimulated the population on the one side to industry and enterprise, while a very moderate and humane control, but from a distance and by strangers, had taken the heart out of the subjects of the English crown.*

Influence of the East on Greek art and life.

While, however, the political effects on the cities of Asia Minor were such that they never regained independence, but only exchanged the nominal servitude to the Medes or the Persians for a far more real slavery to the Athenian or to the Spartan Empire, it had not been admitted by the historians that other effects followed which cannot but be regarded as beneficial. The arts and crafts of the East, in precious metals, in chain armour, in rich carpets, in delicate ware, far richer and better than Greek products, exercised a powerful effect upon the manufactures of the Greeks. The style of living among eastern nobles was vastly more refined than that of the wealthiest king or tyrant in Greece; even the ancestral dignity and loyalty of the great Persian nobles were something different from, and superior to, the somewhat mercantile refinement of the Greeks. The only thorough aristocrats in Greece, the Spartans, sustained their pride by rudeness and exclusiveness, whereas the Lydian or Persian grandee lived in splendour, with a great retinue, and with the field sports of our modern gentleman. The elder or younger Cyrus did not hunt with less zeal than the Spartan youth, but kept in their preserves far nobler and more dangerous game.

Superior refinement of Lydian and Persian grandees.

Thus the Greeks were brought very early into contact with a distinct type of human excellence not democratic, just as they came in Polybius's day to wonder at the

* I need hardly say that this remark does not apply to the present Dominion of Canada, nor in any case to the province of Quebec, whose backwardness, still patent enough, is due to totally different causes.

Roman patrician, who was a great gentleman, also of a distinct type. So clever and assimilating a people could not but admire, and perhaps envy, this splendid life. Individuals like the older Miltiades and like the Athenian Iphicrates * were able to attain to some semblance of it by connections with Thracian chieftains and wealth derived from the gold mines of that country. But, generally speaking, the "Great King" was a sort of figure of gold, living in a glorious residence, of which the occasional mercenaries who reached Babylon or Ecbatana brought back reports that sounded like fairy tales. Hence there was to open to adventurous young men the chance of service in the far East or in Egypt, from which they must have brought back considerable wealth. Yet we never in this early time hear of mercenaries as a class, but only of individuals, nor do we know of any important accounts which they preserved of their adventures, until we come to the days of Xenophon. We may assume that the great satraps and nobles looked with contempt upon the clever self-seeking adventurers whom they employed, whom at times they enslaved, and again at whose hands they suffered defeat. But no contact with the West ever destroyed their high qualities. From the times of the Persian wars, when Herodotus describes them with sympathy in their home life — or else jumping overboard when asked by their king to lighten his ship in a dangerous storm — we feel ourselves in the society like that of the old French *noblesse;* so that down to the barons who fought against Alexander and whose splendour in war and sport may be seen perpetuated on the great sarcophagus of the king of Sidon, the eastern (Aryan)

Opportunities for Greek adventurers in the East.

High civilization of eastern nobles.

* The marriage of the general Iphicrates to a Thracian princess, and the luxury of the feast, was the subject of popular comment on the stage at Athens.

nobles were not barbarians in any reasonable sense, but civilized and probably cultivated men.

The peoples who kept pressing on the great Italiot cities were very far different—rude Samnites and Lucanians, who, like the Thracians, thought only of raids and plunder. The Sikels or aborigines of Sicily were not numerous or powerful enough for this aggressive policy, unless backed by the Carthaginians, and were kept in check, and even greatly civilized, by the chain of cities reaching round their coasts. But here too the jealous isolation of Dorian from Ionian, of merchant from merchant, would have caused the ruin of these cities in detail but for the rise of the great tyrants, of whom Gelon was the foremost, who consolidated the Greek power in capable hands and fought the battle of Hellenedom as well in their way as did the democracy of Athens. The fame of Gelon became so great that when appealed to by Sparta and Athens for help in the great Persian wars, he offered a great contribution of ships and men, provided he were given the chief command. He claimed therefore the primacy in Hellenedom. But the events of the previous hundred years had determined that the centre of gravity in this brilliant civilization lay not in Sicily, Italy, or Asia Minor, but, in spite of its comparative poverty, in the central peninsula of the race.

The rise of Sicily through its tyrants.

For here, after many struggles, in war and in politics, it was becoming more and more clear that in Peloponnesus Sparta must lead; in continental Greece, Athens. Sparta had had long struggles with her neighbours since she had attained internal peace and stability from the wisdom of Lycurgus. First came the great wars against Messene and Arcadia—the latter so picturesquely sketched (in his first book) by Herodotus, the former only known to us from the fragments of Tyrtæus and

Joint supremacy of Sparta and Athens.

the reports, centuries later, drawn from the literature of the restored Messene. Then there was the danger from Pheidon of Argos and other tyrants, who seem to have led the Achæan or Ionian element in the Peloponnesus against their Dorian masters.*

Spartan superiority in the Peloponnesus.

But neither at Sicyon, Corinth, or Argos were the tyrants, however respectable or however brilliant, able to make any large combination against the tough valour and consistent policy of Sparta. Had she been disposed for conquest, she could probably have divided the rest of Peloponnesus as she had done Messene, among Dorian aristocrats. But her policy was anything but ambitious. From the description of Xenophon ("De Republica Lacedæmoniorum"), from the speeches of Athenian opponents in the history of Thucydides, and from the treatises of Plutarch, are derived the current views of Spartan life, which we should never have inferred from the fragments of Alcman or of Tyrtæus, the poets who flourished and sang in Sparta.

Respect of Greeks for Spartan type.

It may have been not only the laws of Lycurgus but the long hardships and dangers of the Messenian wars as well as the growth in power of the ephors and the constant fear of Helot insurrections, which conspired to form that peculiar type which all Greece admired, and could not rival down to her latest days. This Greek admiration was expressed not only in countless anecdotes and passages in history, but in the theories of the philosophers. There was hardly one of them who framed an ideal polity that did not borrow his prime ideas of the framework of such a society from that of Sparta. On this I have already commented.

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*This is the theory set forth with much great ability by E. Curtius in his "Greek History." But whether the Achæan population was in league with the tyrants because it was Achæan, or because it was oppressed by the Dorian aristocracies, is not clear.

But however admirable the silence and modesty of the youth, the terse and pithy utterance of age, the simple dress and habits, the absence of money and trade, may have been within Spartan society, this education unfitted the citizens for an imperial policy, and generally failed to keep its hold on those who came within the reach of luxuries abroad. The Spartans were the first to discover and insist upon drill and discipline as the necessary means of securing their military superiority. But to this development of tactics they never added good strategy. They did not pursue vigorously after a battle; they had no notion of planning a campaign. Nevertheless they attained to such prestige as a disciplined infantry that no Greeks ever withstood them in fair fight on the open field, till the Thebans at Coronea and afterward most signally at Leuctra showed that they had solved the problem of defeating them. The Spartan was not without vanity; the youth showed it in their military dress and the polishing of their arms; the elders in the polishing of their epigrams; for the pointed retorts wherewith they answered flowery eloquence were cited and were collected throughout Greece.

Spartan military discipline superior to their strategy.

To sum up then, the Spartans though not an advancing or conquering power, aiming at the subjection of Greece, were still the great resisting power, which any assailant would find most formidable. They were in this sense the backbone of Hellas; and, as a matter of fact, in spite of successful invasions and great reverses in subsequent centuries, Sparta was not subdued till the very end of Greek history.

Sparta, though without an imperial policy, is a match for Athens.

But when we speak of the backbone of Greece, we must not forget that there were also some large reserve forces of primitive folk, which had not yet entered upon the path of civilization, and were hidden in their moun-

tains till the day came when the Greater States became weary and exhausted, and these others in their turn took up the torch—such were the inhabitants of Arcadia, and of the inland Achæa, which, after the old coast cities had sent out colonists to Ionia (in semi-mythical times), fall into obscurity till the days of the Achæan and the Arcadian Leagues, three hundred years later. Such too in central Greece were all the mountaineers dwelling north and west of Delphi—Ætolians and Acarnanians, who spoke indeed Greek, and who had Greek blood in their veins, but whose dialect and manners were rude and barbarous to their more brilliant neighbours. Nevertheless these were, as I have said, a large reserve force of purity and vigour, which was ever imperceptibly sustaining its more advanced neighbours with its labour and its blood, and maintaining that variety which is so essential a feature in Greek civilization.

Reserve force of Greece in its less civilized tribes.

From these latter the Bœotians and Athenians were long since differentiated by greater wealth and better organization. Orchomenus and Thebes were famous old Greek cities of the highest type. The Minyæ, or old nobility of Orchomenus, had long since shown by their palaces, and still more by those tunnels wherewith they drained Lake Copais through the northern hills, into the Euripus, that they had profited like Mycenæ and Tiryns by the culture of earlier races. But of early historical Bœotia we know curiously little. From Hesiod we have a vivid picture of the hard life of the poorer people and their oppression by the rich, say about 700 B. C. From Pindar we have no definite account of his native country; but we can infer with certainty that the city which held such a poet by no means deserved the Attic jibes, nor was the school that formed about Pindar—every early Greek poet was the

Importance of Bœotia.

centre of some such school—composed of men that deserved to be called "Bœotian swine." Details, however, we have almost none. Hesiod spoke of his district as one of poor soil and bad climate, in comparison with his father's Asiatic home. But in historical days, Bœotia is known indeed for a foggy and comparatively damp climate, caused by the plentiful watering of the country, but this also secured the fertility of the alluvial soil, carried down by many rivers from the surrounding mountains.

Agricultural disadvantages of Attica stimulate a hardy race.

It is in contrast to these rich lowlands that Thucydides speaks of the light soil of Attica, and says that in early days it was little subject to invasions, to which its natural features afforded but little inducement. A struggle with the soil has often been the education for future greatness. Human beings who find everything ready to their hand seldom rise above their material comforts. Those that are born to hard labour acquire the qualities that make them first masters of their circumstances, then of other men. Thus if all Greece, as compared with neighbouring lands, was a rugged mother training up a vigorous offspring, so within Greece itself it was not the rich Thessaly, Bœotia, or Messene that brought up the finest population. Attica, however, had another signal advantage over Bœotia. The latter is circled by mountains which forbid easy access of commerce to the sea, and which afford no harbours; whereas Attica, a long peninsula, afforded on either side a coast for ships and other inducements for commerce.

Trade subordinated by Pisistratids to public works.

It is somewhat surprising that though Solon showed a distinct sympathy for this adventurous life, though trading was in no respect derogatory to the Ionian or Attic grandee, though it should have been the policy of Pisis-

tratus and his family to encourage this spirit, and the gaining of material wealth, as an outlet for the energy which was dangerous when turned to politics, yet we do not hear of the trade or shipping of Athens during this period. Great works were carried out by the tyrants. They commenced the Olympieion, of which the remains, as rebuilt by Antiochus Epiphanes and by Hadrian, are still one of the most wonderful monuments of Athens. They took water from the stream Ilissus, some miles above Athens, and led it underground to where we have now learned to place the stately fountain called the "Nine Wells," of which the water was used for sacred purposes by the Attic maidens.* This great work of usefulness and beauty—for we can infer that there was often a scarcity of water at the spot sacred to the god Dionysus in *Limnæ*†—shows that the tyrants laboured to show their care and interest in the citizen's comfort. We are also led to infer from stray hints that they not only authorized and regulated the recitation of the old epic poetry, but encouraged the village and vintage feasts of the god Dionysus, which soon developed into the magnificent Attic tragedy. These literary tastes are not perhaps so much those of Pisistratus, a plain man of action, who had lived a checkered life of adventure, but of his second son, Hipparchus, who gathered about him poets and artists, and whose vices, to which most historians popularly ascribed the fall of the dynasty, were mere false imputations, trans-

The Olympieion.

Encouragement of poets and artists.

* I have already mentioned (page 86) this novelty, but desire to insist upon it more fully. Dr. Dörpfeld, the distinguished head of the German school at Athens, showed me in person the results of his research, and explained to me his conclusions. Though I see that the English scholars are, as usual, sceptical of such a novelty, and anxious to hold to the old theory which places the fountain at the Ilissus, nearly a mile away from the city, I presume that they will in course of time adopt what the evidence demands, and what most German philologists, who have seen the sites, are ready to admit.

† Viz., the marsh, or perhaps the washing pits in which Greek women now, as then, do the washing for their households.

ferred to him from his younger and dissolute brother, Thessalus.*

Expulsion of Hippias.

The actual expulsion of the remaining tyrant Hippias is ascribed by Herodotus to the machinations of the exiled Alcmæonidæ, who brought round the Spartans to interfere. It is undesirable that in this book I should rehearse again the facts, which are found in every history of Greece. The remarkable point is that prominently brought out by Herodotus (V. 58). "It is manifest that not in one but in every respect the right of free speech is a good thing, if indeed the Athenians so long as they were under tyrants were no better in war than any of their neighbours, whereas as soon as they had got rid of the tyrants they became a long way the best. This makes it plain that when subjects they were slack because they were only working for a master, but when liberated each became eager to achieve success for himself." The historian forgets or ignores what I have already set down as an important cause of this change: the unification of classes and interests in opposition to the tyrants, growing with the increased intelligence of the people, owing to their education by these very tyrants. It is the mild and concessive absolute ruler who generally feeds up the opposition which his more ruthless predecessors had crushed with a violent hand. It is quite certain that the Athenians of 510 B. C. were far more fit for liberty than those of 590. Solon was probably a far greater man than Clisthenes, yet Solon's constitution was almost abortive, whereas Clisthenes was the real father of the Athenian democracy.

Athenian development under rule of Pisistratids.

But though Athens, Sparta, and Syracuse had got so far that they asserted, and maintained by arms, a

* This is what the newly discovered "Constitution of Athens" has to say on the subject. The author, be he Aristotle or not, seems desirous to correct Thucydides.

superiority over their neighbours about the year 500 B. C., this superiority was but new at Athens; new and doubtful, and depending upon a clever despot, at Syracuse; the only traditional and stable primacy, the Spartan, was not suitable for an active or improving policy. In other words, the love of independence in each organized city, the jealousy of its neighbours' interference, nay even of their success, kept Greece from coalescing, and so from subduing the peoples of the Levant by her arms and her arts. On the other hand, we must not forget that this political individualism which left her a prey to a strong invader had its compensating features. The brilliancy of Greek civilization is to a great extent the consequence of its variety, as that of a diamond is of its many facets, and we may be sure that neither literature nor art would have reached its matchless height had it not been for the competition of many centres and schools. The same thing may be said (in a far less degree) of the Germany which I remember, ruled by sixty-six independent dukelets and princelets, all with the courts, embassies, coinage, customs, of separate kingdoms. Politically they were impotent; in art and literature, in science and philosophy, these many courts, these many universities, have done an inestimable work for mankind. The Greek world up to the year 500 B. C. only showed its so-called unity by a community of language, one general complexion in its many creeds, and the festivals or games to which only members of the race were admitted. So long as no conquering race occupied the neighbouring lands this state of things might last; but when that contemporary arose, Greece must either go to pieces and fall piecemeal into the enemy's power, or she must consolidate herself and offer a national resistance to the invader. The former

Reasons for instability of newly acquired power of Athens, Sparta, and Syracuse.

Modern parallel of Germany.

Political dangers to Greece from lack of unity.

catastrophe happened in Ionia, on the coast of Asia Minor, where the many Greek cities would not loyally combine; the latter in Greece proper, where the great struggle commenced under the presidency of Sparta, but passed, for want of enterprise, out of their hands into those of the Athenians. There is no struggle in all history more famous, or more picturesquely told, than the conflict which lasted from the Ionian revolt to the battle of Platæa.

Struggle between Greece and Persia.

But the last twelve years (491-79 B. C.) are especially and permanently interesting. How much they owe to the genius of the historian Herodotus it is hard to overestimate. With the fairness of real genius he has given the Persians credit for their good points, for the valour of their aristocracy, for that self-sacrificing loyalty to their sovereign which was impossible to a Greek. So also he has not failed to chronicle the shortcomings and meannesses of the Greeks, their squabbles and jealousies, their frequent disloyalty to the great national cause. It seemed indeed that this cause was hopeless. The priests of the Delphic oracle, who based their responses on the best and widest information received from all parts of the Hellenic world, made up their minds that resistance was vain. They prophesied ruin, and advised submission. Nor can we say that their forecast was unreasonable. They were bound to maintain their reputation for infallibility, so that in doubtful cases they fell back on studied ambiguity. But now their decision was quite clear, and by it they must have lost much of their reputation and influence. Herodotus leads us indeed to believe that with the least more diplomacy or obstinacy or delay, the Persians must have succeeded. Their opponents were always on the point of making terms separately and dispersing. But the hand of

Delphic oracle advises submission to the Persians.

providence, as he declares with strong faith, had decreed it otherwise. "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory is of the Lord."

Causes of Greek victory at Marathon.

Putting aside the battle of Marathon, which was only a very unimportant skirmish,* wherein Miltiades first showed the superiority of Greek to oriental armour, we may enumerate the natural causes employed by that providence whom Herodotus regards as "putting down the mighty from their seat, and exalting the humble and meek" as follows: first, the superior armour just mentioned, which made the *hoplite*, as we comically call the heavy-armed soldier, far more than a match of a Persian or Sakan at close quarters; secondly, the great activity and patriotism of the Athenians, whose city was in ashes, whose all was at stake, yet who fought without losing their heads or giving way to despair; thirdly, the sturdy valour and honesty of the Spartans, who though stupid and without any intelligent policy, yet when once persuaded stood like men and behaved like gentlemen.

Genius of Themistocles and incompetence of Xerxes.

To these larger causes were added two personal ones of no little weight—the genius and resource of the Athenian Themistocles, and the folly and incompetence of the Persian king Xerxes. Had Cyrus or Darius, or even Ochus, the contemporary of Demosthenes, been on the throne, the result could hardly have been doubtful. But Xerxes, that flogged the Hellespont, that gathered an army so unwieldy as to threaten its own destruction every week from famine, that took no precautions, that made no trial of his gold, which had been far more effectual than his sword, was the very man to wreck his expedition. We know what his home

* There is a whole literature on this battle, the most recent in English being Mr. Reginald Macan's careful commentary on the central three books of Herodotus. The vaunting exaggeration of the Athenians has obscured the real facts so much that the truth is hardly now to be attained.

life was from the book of Esther, of which he is the Ahasuerus. We have, besides the history of Herodotus, an inestimable relic of the time in the "Persæ" of Æschylus. For that poet was a partaker in the war, and fought at Marathon and at Salamis. In his poetical version of the events, which dwells rather upon the tragic results at the Persian court than the Greek exultation, the ghost of Darius rises, a noble and calm figure—to emphasize the wretched weakness, and rebuke the weak lamentations, of his degenerate son.

Themistocles a typical Greek.

On the other side we have that extraordinary and typical figure of a Greek, Themistocles; a man of ready wit, of endless resource, not hampered by moral scruples, in some respects a scoundrel, in many more a patriot, a diplomatist rather than a tactician, a debater rather than a warrior. Such were in our own century the Greek patriot-bandits that freed their country, Odysseus, Kolokotronis, and others, combining dishonesty, greed, and cruelty with a keen love of liberty and a high resolve to risk their lives for their country's emancipation. So the Spartan infantry and the Athenian fleet were held together by argument, by fraud, by threats, till Greece was saved. The defeat was probably not so crushing to the Persians as the Greeks pretended. Artabazus, the king's uncle, carried his forty thousand men home after Platæa, just as Grouchy carried his division to Paris after Waterloo. But there was no pursuit of Artabazus. Persian gold was still able to buy dissensions and obtain treachery among the Greeks.

Main result of struggle with Persia was Hellenic unity.

But the great struggle had one indelible effect. It made the Greeks for the first time feel themselves one nation as opposed to the Persian Empire. The dedications and votive offerings commemorated Mycenæan and Tirynthian exiles from long-destroyed cities as it did

Spartans and Athenians — all members of the great Hellenic unity, now asserting itself against the world of barbarians. The bronze pedestal of the tripod offered by the king of Sparta at Delphi, to the dumfounded oracle, still stands in the Hippodrome of Constantinople, and upon it when first it was excavated the names of the tribes were verified.*

Would that we had more material relics of this glorious time! We can hardly venture to draw a picture of the life of the men that saved Greece. Æschylus we know, but he is so engrossed with the ideal in his august tragedies that the mere human Athenian is lost in the world-poet. Yet merely to have understood his thoughts shows what was to be expected from his Athenian audience. He shows to us the great strides with which Athenian culture was progressing, and that it was progressing in depth as well as breadth. Nothing will better illustrate this than to compare him with his elder contemporary, Pindar, a lyric poet of the first order, well versed in all the richness and the splendour of lyrical diction and of stately performance.† Yet if we put the lyrical portions of Æschylus into comparison with Pindar, we seem to be contemplating not contemporaries but men a century apart. It is as great as the contrast between the old-fashioned, simple, believing Herodotus and the advanced, crabbed, sceptical Thucydides. In Pindar the richness of the words, the elaborateness of the metres, seem a vehicle far too great for his ideas. In Æschylus the huge conceptions, the deep speculations, seem far too great for the words.

Athenian progress illustrated in Æschylus.

Contrast between Æschylus and Pindar.

* This was in 1851; now, though the monument is surrounded by a railing and saved from harm, the names which are on the lower portion, which stands in a deep inclosed pit, are no longer to be deciphered, till the surface is again cleared. This observation I made after a personal examination of the monument in 1893.

† *Cf.* page 96, where I have compared this poet with his older contemporaries.

And yet the words are mighty words — "Æschylus' bronze-throat eagle-bark for blood," as Browning has described them, borrowing his metaphors from Æschylus himself.

It were exceedingly instructive to demonstrate this contrast by printing passages in parallel columns to illustrate my assertion. But how can this be done without printing them in the original? and this book is intended for readers who would not understand it. It is hard enough to translate any real stylist, in prose or poetry, from his own into any other tongue. With a poet like Pindar it is perfectly impossible, for the music of the original is most of its merit, and his ideas without this music are but second-rate literature. It is not quite impossible with Æschylus, for even in bald prose his ideas cannot lose their splendour. But how difficult it is may be seen from the translation of the "Agamemnon" by the most learned of the great English poets of this century, Robert Browning, who knew the Greek poets, as I can testify from many discussions with him, with an accuracy hardly equalled by any professor of Greek in England. His versions from Euripides, his studies on Aristophanes, show this erudition very plainly. But his "Agamemnon" is only intelligible to those who know the original; to the rest of the world it is well-nigh a sealed book.

Impossibility of translating Æschylus.

The "Agamemnon."

Yet what can better prove the greatness of the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus than the fact that it is one of the three or four books which scholars and poets are always endeavouring to translate, and yet no version, however well received, is final. The "Iliad" of Homer, the "Inferno" of Dante, the "Faust" of Goethe, share with the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus this eternal tribute to their excellence, and of these five there can be

This impossibility a proof of greatness.

little doubt that it offers far the hardest problems to the English translator.

Can there be any more cogent proof that the Athenians who produced and who appreciated such a poet were indeed far advanced in the path of culture?

The splendid imagery of Æschylus.

Nor is this play the only proof of his excellence. Each of the seven left us by the jealous hand of time has its splendour, none perhaps more than the "Prometheus," where the structure is simple and the difficulties of the text not considerable. The very extravagances of the commentators prove the extraordinary suggestiveness of this early foreshadowing in the prophetic visions of the poet, of a Messiah suffering for his compassion, and enduring crucifixion for his redemption of men from misery.

Seven interpretations of the "Prometheus."

The question of the poet's intention is far more difficult, and will probably never be satisfactorily answered. The number of interpretations put upon the myth by commentators is astonishing, and yet it is possible that the poet had none of them consciously before his mind's eye. They have been well summed up by Patin* under six heads. They are first the *historical* theories, such as that of Diodorus Siculus, a scholiast of Apollonius Rhodius, and others, that make Prometheus a ruler of Egypt or of Scythia, who suffered in his struggles to reclaim his country and its people. Secondly, the *philosophical*, which hold it to be the image of the struggles and trials of humanity against natural obstacles. This seems the view of Welcker, and is certainly that of M. Guignaut. Thirdly, the *moral*, which place the struggle within the breast of the individual, and against his passions, as was done by Bacon, by Calderon, and also by Schlegel, as well as by several older French critics. Fourthly, the *Christian*, much favored by Catholic divines in France, supported by Jos. de Maistre, Edgar Quinet, Ch. Maquin, and others, who see in the story either the redemption of man, the fall of Satan, or the fall of man, dimly echoed by some tradition from the sacred Scriptures. Gar-

Historical.

Philosophical.

Moral.

Christian.

* "Études," I., page 254. I have added Mr. Lloyd's, from his "Age of Pericles."

bitius, a Basle editor of the "Prometheus" in 1559, seems to have led the way in this direction. But as Lord Lytton justly observes, "whatever theological system it shadows forth was rather the gigantic conception of the poet himself than the imperfect revival of any forgotten creed, or the poetical disguise of any existing philosophy." Yet there is certainly something of disbelief or defiance of the creed of the populace.

Scientific. Fifthly, the *scientific*, which regard it as a mere personification of astronomical facts, as is the fashion with comparative mythologies. Similar attempts seem to have been made of old by

Political. the alchemists. Sixthly, there is the *political* interpretation of Mr. Watkiss Lloyd, who thinks the genius of Themistocles and the ingratitude of Athens were the real object of the poet's teaching, though disguised in a myth. There is lastly to

Romantic. be noticed a unique theory, which may be called the *romantic*, propounded by Desmaretz in 1648, when he published a rationalistic imitation of Euemerus, entitled *La vérité des fables ou l'histoire des dieux de l'antiquité*. He explains how Prometheus betrays his sovereign, Jupiter, for the love of his mistress Pandora, a lady as exacting as any princess of chivalry. He retires in despair to the wastes of the Caucasus, where remorse daily gnaws his heart, and he suffers agonies more dreadful than if an eagle were continually devouring his entrails. Prometheus at the French court of the seventeenth century was sure to cut a strange figure.*

Moral problem of the "Agamemnon." But I return from this superhuman, supernatural creation, the scene of which is laid in the grim mountains of the Caucasus, to consider the problem treated in the "Agamemnon" and its connected plays. It is the problem of the duty imposed upon the son of an adulterous mother, who has slain his father, and lives in the palace and upon the throne of her murdered husband in company with her paramour. Both deserve death at the hands of the natural avenger of blood, but one is bound to him by the holiest ties of affection; she is his mother. What then is the path of duty before him? And, what to Æschylus is vastly more important,

* "Greek Literature," Mahaffy, Vol. II., pages 261–2.

what is the world-law which decides the question? Are the bonds of blood which bind a son to his father, and which command him to avenge that father, holier than those which bind him to his mother, and command him to protect her, and to save her life? With Æschylus the guilt of the original murder is too great; the odious crime of the queen must have its punishment; but no sooner is she dead than the avenging Furies, that punish matricide as such, and will allow no palliation, rise upon the scene, and persecute the matricide to madness. Each of these great moral obligations has its sanction; each is determined by a divine law; the wretched mortal who is entangled in so terrible a position cannot escape from woe, for the laws of the gods are not to be set aside, and they show us a conflict which no human mind can solve.*

"Hamlet" presents the same problem.

The reader will already have anticipated the reason why I dwell upon this play. It is the very problem which Shakespeare has rehandled in the greatest of all his plays. Hamlet has before him the very same problem. Its solution is so terrible a strain upon him that it unhinges his mind, and if he is forbidden by the ethics of a Christian age to lay hands upon his mother, nevertheless her death is required to satisfy justice, and his to remove him from a house polluted beyond cure with the stains of lust and violence.

The fact that Æschylus two thousand years before Shakespeare felt out the same great controversy, and handled it with no less grandeur and depth, shows perhaps, better than a thousand analogies in material

* The final escape of Orestes by the casting vote of Athena, when the Areopagus at Athens was equally divided on the ground that the child is really derived from its father and not its mother, is a poor and lame conclusion, in a scene intended for a political purpose, and very damaging to the dignity of tragedy. But such inequalities are met with among other great poets also. No human genius is without its flaws.

Highly intelligent audience necessary for appreciation of Æschylus.

comforts, how completely modern, in the truest sense, was the culture of the Greeks. We are at a loss to know how so difficult and novel a drama could possibly have been followed by any audience. There is certainly no modern audience who could do so without previous study of the words. Yet it is very doubtful whether such previous study was possible to the hearers of Æschylus. Novelty was an essential feature in the plays acted for competition, and though copies certainly became accessible after the performance, it seems likely that these extraordinary dramas were played to a very imperfectly prepared audience.

It seems to me that no problem in the history of civilization is more deeply interesting than to fathom if possible the life and other occupations of the people who were fed upon such intellectual diet. We know that the poet himself composed the music of his dramas, which were almost like our operas in the prominence of the *melic* and *orchestic* side,* as the Greeks would call the adjuncts to stage poetry.

Greek music far behind poetry.

But there is every reason to think that, transcendent as is the poetry, and fit for, nay, too good for, any modern stage, the music would appear to us simply barbarous. Sister arts, as I said already, do not advance along parallel lines abreast; one may be far in advance of the rest, and in this case the relics we have of later Greek music give us no suggestion that we should appreciate its earlier forms.

Regarding sculpture we are better informed, and here the case is all the more interesting, as that art, before another century had passed over, had become so perfect that all the efforts of all our present civilization have never

* That is to say, the *musical* and *dancing* side. The *orchestra* in a Greek theatre was so called because it was a *dancing-place*.

THESEUS WITH THE MARATHONIAN BULL.

Sculpture not yet abreast of poetry.

attained, or even approached to it. Fortunately we have a few specimens of the plastic art of the earlier time—two or three tomb-reliefs, the figure of Theseus carrying the Marathonian bull, and, best of all, the very remarkable series of goddesses or priestesses found recently on the Acropolis and undoubtedly part of the ornaments of the older temples then, which were burnt, and their statues overthrown, by the Persians. Thus the strange series of ladies with their rich though conventional dressing of the hair, their very gaudy but elegant dresses, their stereotyped smile, tell us what the hearers of great poetry could admire as representations of the human figure. There seems in them but a somewhat improved representation, in stone, of the grotesque figures common on the archaic vases; there is that disregard of life and adherence to a conventional type which characterizes art in its infancy. Who could imagine that in fifty years more Phidias would be at work in his studio?

Architecture probably not more advanced than sculpture.

We are not informed about the architecture of these days. We know that the wooden pillars, supporting a wooden architrave with brick walls and terra-cotta facing, had made way for stone temples built on the same model. The original wooden structure may be plainly felt by any one who studies any Greek temple. There are some drums of pillars of an older Parthenon built into the great circuit wall, which was raised around the huge platform, made of all the older ruins and rubbish, whereon Pericles and his friends set up the perfect buildings whose remains are still there. These drums look rude and clumsy beside the finer work which is near them. A huge terra-cotta composition representing a monster of the serpent kind, used no doubt to ornament the pediment (gable end) of one of the older

temples, is now to be seen on the Acropolis, and is rather grotesque and ugly than grand. It is therefore, on the whole, likely that the architecture of this people kept pace with their sculpture, and did not attain to dignity and harmony till the next generation. But this is not certain. Most critics seem to place the great temple at Pæstum in the sixth century B. C. If this be so, even outlying Greeks, who had settled beyond the borders of Magna Græcia, could then erect a splendid building, massive, dignified, and perfect in its proportions. But I gravely doubt its age. We have no record or mention of it in any ancient author. Such splendour was so common in Greek cities that but a very small number of our extant ruins could have been discovered by following the indications of the historians or antiquaries. In its proportions it seems analogous enough to the great temple at Olympia for us to place it in the same century—that is to say, after the Persian wars were over. The few gaunt pillars standing at Corinth may possibly be older; but the building to which they belonged is too ruined to form any judgment of its general effect.

Possible exception of temple at Pæstum.

As regards the private architecture of the day, it is all gone; probably the cheap materials and the simple construction of men who desired to lodge their gods splendidly, but were careless of themselves, would not have lasted, even through quiet times, very long. The life of these people was in the open air, in the fields and the market-place, and they only retired into their houses to eat or to sleep. Their houses were of little value to them. The gods and the state occupied all their interests. The tragedies of Æschylus as contrasted with the odes of Pindar show how deeply they thought about their gods, how moral theology was displacing

No evidence from domestic architecture.

Rise of moral theology.

stories about the gods, so that their alleged adventures were now far less interesting than their moral qualities.

Greek talent for expression.

This deeper view was derived, I think, from their completer studies in politics—a science in which they already showed the same mastery that they showed in their poetry. It is perhaps a special talent for expression, for language as distinguished from other human products, which specially marks the Greeks. In poetry we know the result. But in prose long before the development of forensic oratory as a studied art, there must have been a great development of natural eloquence, of animated discussion, of that free speech which the Greeks regarded as their dearest liberty. It is certain that this talent would react upon their thinking, and produce that clearness of insight, that general appreciation of sound argument, which is perfectly necessary to any sober democratic government. For there, it is by persuading the majority that the actions of the state are determined. Themistocles and Aristides carried on their controversies before the people ; the one *persuaded* the people to become a naval force, and to fortify their city with impregnable defences ; the other *persuaded* the Greeks of the islands and coast cities of the Ægean, not more by his upright character than by his arguments, to look away from Sparta as a useless and lazy president of Greece, and put themselves under the energetic guidance of Athens. But now we are passing into a new stage of Greek civilization, which will require a separate chapter.

Its effect on politics.

CHAPTER V.

THE LIFE OF THE NATION FROM THE DEFEAT OF THE PERSIANS (479 B. C.) TILL THE FALL OF IMPERIAL ATHENS (404 B. C.).

Lack of detailed history of next half century.

IT is very strange that the period following upon the decisive defeat of the "eastern barbarians" is so little prominent in Greek history. We should have thought that with this great outburst of national energy, the forces employed and matured in the great war would forthwith have turned into other lines, and made their country splendid in art and in literature as well as in science and in commerce. Yet such is not the case. The Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars are separated by a half century, in which we can trace the rise and waning of the Athenian Empire over the sea, and in the latter part of which arises a great galaxy of writers, both in poetry and prose. But though these works tell us much, the history is only before us in outline, and when we seek to penetrate the mist that covers the rest of Greece, we have of Sparta, Argos, Thebes only vague or brief information. It is no doubt an accident; it is the loss of the historians who treated of these matters, with the exception of Thucydides, whose subject only permitted him to give a short retrospect. Plutarch's "Life of Pericles," drawn from good and early sources, which have not yet been identified by the Germans who seek after them, shows what might have been the case had the memoirs of the day, those of Ion and Stesim-

Due to loss of historians.

brotos and the rest, been preserved. But there is very little to guide us now.

Our conception of Greek politics enlarged and modified by the new Aristotelian treatise.

Our best information is concerning politics, concerning the successive steps by which the Athenians waxed great, and this side of the period has received great additional light from the "Polity of the Athenians," found in Egypt not long since. But, as if our difficulties were not already great enough, their author, long since received as Aristotle by Plutarch and the grammarians who quoted from him, differs in material points from Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon. This work, however, is not intended to discuss or display our difficulties.

Injurious effects of Persian War on Asiatic Greeks.

We can still see reasons, however, why the epoch before us should not have been an epoch generally great in literature or generally brilliant in art, however great the exception in Athens and a few art centres. In the first place, the Asiatic Greeks were considerably damaged in wealth and importance. Though the cities on headlands and on the adjacent islands could be protected by the Athenian navy, the inland cities were well nigh lost to the nationality, being subject to the dominion, and probably the harsher dominion, of the Persians.

Effect on commerce.

Commerce too, and intercourse in general, with the rich and populous interior of Asia Minor must have been much impeded, since the Greeks were now open and vigorous enemies of the Persians, and disposed to carry on a permanent war between the East and the West.

In this way, therefore, Hellenedom was somewhat curtailed, and the example of courtly luxury formerly often seen at the Persian court and at those of the satraps, must have been rarer and less influential. The luxurious life of the old Ionians had passed away, and with it perhaps many of the refinements of an earlier

age. For democracy had become fashionable, and with democracy ruder manners and simpler fare, while the energies formerly directed to art and to commerce merged in politics. We know in our own time how absorbing politics are, and how a nation that lives in them may come to think of nothing else. It is not every city, it is not one in a thousand, that can find genius and energy for all paths of life, as did the Athenians. I think, therefore, that the predominance of politics had much to say to the apparent neglect, or want of advance, in material life in many parts of Greece. The Spartans of the Peloponnesian War appear rather inferior to those of the Persian. The rest of Greece does not seem advancing, except in architecture and sculpture. There are no new discoveries to make the life of men easier. There is no such advance as we have made in our century since the great wars ceased. But silently there must have been progress. The temples of the middle of this century, notably the great temple at Olympia, the Parthenon and Theseum at Athens, and the best of what we call the archaic school of sculpture, are derived from this time.

Neglect of the art of living in favour of politics.

Steady progress of art and letters.

The stimulus of Athens accounts for a great deal. Many pupils must have gone out from the school of Phidias and spread abroad the great and subtle principles of his art. Ictinus, the builder of the Parthenon, wrote a book describing it. Such a book must have been a precious handbook of architecture to all that acquired it. And acquire it they could, for now that intercourse with Egypt, during its revolt from the Persians, was easy, the use of papyrus must have spread rapidly to all parts of Ægean, and so books must have been easily multiplied. The great poets from Pindar downward could not possibly compose their elaborate

Spread of literature.

choral systems without writing. The plays of Æschylus and Sophocles were not laid by after the first performance, but read and quoted among the crowd at Athens. In this way knowledge must have increased, and life must have become, if not more luxurious and comfortable, at least more modern.

Peculiarities of Athenian naval warfare.

The development of the Attic navy was perhaps the most singular thing of that time. For two centuries back, the so-called *trireme*, a narrow decked ship worked with three banks of oars, had been known and used for war. No modern naval constructor has been able to explain to us how rows of oars, one higher than the other, could possibly be managed without fouling or hopeless awkwardness. None of us has ever succeeded in producing a possible model of such a ship. Yet this was the usual ship of war, and, as the Athenians developed it, went long journeys at eight or ten miles an hour, a pace not inferior to the ordinary coasting steamers now in those waters. It was not detained by calm, and was in this way better than our sailing ships.

Perfection of marine tactics.

But so completely did the Athenians make these ships a matter of naval tactics, of evolutions with the actual boat, that in their palmy days they carried only ten armed men as marine soldiers, while there were two hundred to manage the oars. They won their battles not by boarding and fighting, but by so manœuvring that they rammed their opponents' ships, and sank them, dealing with the crews when they lay helpless in their disabled and sinking ship. A very small battle fought by their Admiral Phormion at the mouth of the Gulf of Corinth, described by Thucydides, has become more famous than many great and decisive sea fights, because it shows us clearly the great perfection to which the Attic navy had brought its marine tactics. Each

captain must have had his men under the same training, the same control, that the captain of a British ship has his crew.*

Turning back to literature, which is, after all, far our clearest evidence of Attic civilization in its perfection, we find quite a new and peculiar character imprinted upon it by the Attic spirit. It is remarkable that the perfection of prose writing was so late — not till the very end of the term before us. In any case prose is always a product of the maturity of literature. The imagination produces poetry; it is rational reflection, discussion, practical use that produce prose, and this is not required till a nation has arrived at the fulness of its vigour and the maturity of its life. There is indeed much simplicity and good sense even in such early poets as Solon, but it was not till Athens came victoriously out of the Persian wars, and acquired a great empire, not till poetry and religion were separated from the language of history and of politics, that the severance of the two great branches of letters permitted the later of the two to attain perfection.

Reasons why perfection in poetry precedes perfection in prose.

Yet it cannot by any means be said that Attic prose summed up in itself all the perfections of the Greek intellect. No Attic book ever replaced, indeed ever equalled in its way, the fascinating history of Herodotus; and this work was well known at Athens, and very probably read out to the wits and literary men of that city. Yet the broad sympathies of the great master were foreign to the Attic school; it was the politics of their empire, the peculiarities of their own city and its adversaries, which filled their minds. These they

Narrow sympathies of the Athenians.

* Such actions as that of Phormion do not depend upon their size for their importance. The first action in which Captain Abney Hastings brought steam to bear upon the Turkish fleet, and destroyed a squadron with his single ship, the *Karterio*, working one gun, was also an epoch in naval warfare. *Cf.* Finlay's "History of Greece," VII., 14 *sq.*

analyzed with precision and with depth. But they are strictly men of the present; the orators especially, also the historians, and still more the philosophers. Everywhere, even in the imagination of Plato (who comes later), reason holds its sway, and there is a strictness and chastity in all Attic style which permit only a little ornament, and that of the most carefully chosen kind. These writers all presuppose an exceedingly intelligent public, catching the writer's meaning at every hint, guessing the point of every faint allusion, despising dulness and hating mediocrity. This deep-seated ambition to be clever, which soon became a necessity for success, tended to produce an over-subtlety of language, not conducive to real dignity; the whole effect, intended to be artistic, and in most cases really so, is often, even in the greatest of them, in the prose of Thucydides, in the poetry of Sophocles, distinctly artificial. Antithesis, balancing of epithets, a play of words rather than the labour of thought, sometimes disappoint the reader, even though the grace and purity of the language, both in its strict and simple vocabulary, and in the rich variety of its particles, are the despair of any translator.

Effect of artificiality produced by over-subtlety of language.

It is this prose, reaching from Thucydides to Demosthenes in its golden age, in its silver down to Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom, or even Lucian, which must ever demonstrate to any intelligent man who learns to understand it, that no society ever was, or ever will be, more intellectually cultivated than these Greeks. No audience has arisen ever since which could follow or appreciate such delicate perfection as is the standard of good Attic prose. Future nations may be infinitely more learned in material things; they may have myriad facts of history and facts of science put into their heads; they may have the full experiences of two thousand more

High standard of intellectual culture shown by Attic prose.

years boiled down into an essence, and administered to them from youth up, so that they may enter life carrying with them a mental storehouse of which every shelf is labelled and laden with knowledge. But this very process will probably diminish rather than increase that appreciation of excellence which the perfection of good sense, good taste, and rational training produced in the Athens of Pericles and Plato. What is perhaps more wonderful is that this great result did not die out when the few generations passed away whose genius created this wonderful condition of things. The Greek intellect was so permanently raised by the education of this perfect prose that even down to the age of decadence, among slaves and foreigners who learned its use, the audiences of St. Paul understood arguments and appreciated subtleties which no practical teacher would venture to set undiluted before any modern collection of men.

Its permanence.

But it must not be for one moment imagined that this result was attained by flashes of heaven-born genius; it was the result of genius doing what real genius always does, taking an infinity of trouble. Though the early writers, such as Thucydides, had ample models of clear and simple diction before them, not only in the Ionic prose of older men, but also in the grace and clearness of Euripides's dialogue, it is plain that they plume themselves not upon the narrative, which is simple and clear enough, but on those subtle and contorted lucubrations which assume a rhetorical form, and are efforts at highly artistic composition. We have remains of Thucydides's master, Antiphon, a strong and dangerous spirit, who helped the aristocratic party at Athens with his intellect and with his pen more than with a sword, and whose forensic talents, long used to the criminal courts at

Its perfection the result of art.

Athens, were last used in his great personal defence of his own life and policy, when accused and convicted of political murders and of treason against the democracy. We have some half dozen of his earlier speeches, but how dry and harsh they are, like a fine wine that has not yet ripened, full of close reasoning, of strong sense, but devoid of all the grace and perfume of the mature vintage.

Intricacy of style of Thucydides.

In the same manner, when Thucydides turns to reflections in his history, reflections which usually take the form of debates, he makes his speakers deliver periods so contorted and obscure that they could only delight an audience enamoured of subtleties, and longing to exercise their acuteness upon enigmas of diction. The thoughts of these contorted sentences are seldom deep; they are not, as many commentators pretend, crowded too closely together for clear expression; the same idea, in itself obvious enough, is taken up and tossed about like a shuttlecock between battledores of antithesis. The reader who expects a new truth in each sentence is deceived; he is only chewing the cud of the last clause, but he is so puzzled and interested with these ingenuities that he feels himself performing a high intellectual process. If I here give a specimen from Jowett's translation, it is necessary to warn the reader that his pellucid English is no representative of the weaknesses, but only of the strength of his original. He could no more have allowed a sentence such as those in which Thucydides delighted to issue from his hand, than Racine would have allowed the Greek tragic poet to speak his realities upon the French stage.

Translation from Thucydides.

They pretend that they first offered to have the matter decided by arbitration. The appeal to justice might have some meaning in the mouth of one who before he had recourse to

arms acted honourably, as he now talks fairly, but not when it is made from a position of security and advantage. Whereas these men began by laying siege to Epidamnus, and not until they feared our vengeance did they put forward their specious offer of arbitration. And as if the wrong which they have themselves done at Epidamnus were not enough, they now come hither and ask you to be, not their allies, but their accomplices in crime, and would have you receive them when they are at enmity with us. But they ought to have come when they were out of all danger, not at a time when we are smarting under an injury and they have good reason to be afraid. You have never derived any benefit from their power, but they will now be benefited by yours, and, although innocent of their crimes, you will equally be held responsible by us. If you were to have shared the consequences with them they ought long ago to have shared the power with you. We have shown that our complaints are justified and that our adversaries are tyrannical and dishonest; we will now prove to you that you have no right to receive them. Admitting that the treaty allows any unenrolled cities to join either league, this provision does not apply to those who have in view the injury of others, but only to him who is in need of protection—certainly not to one who forsakes his allegiance and who will bring war instead of peace to those who receive him, or rather, if they are wise, will not receive him on such terms. And war the Corcyræans will bring to you if you listen to them and not to us. For if you become the allies of the Corcyræans you will be no longer at peace with us, but will be converted into enemies; and we must, if you take their part, in defending ourselves against them, defend ourselves against you. But you ought in common justice to stand aloof from both; or, if you must join either, you should join us and go to war with them; to Corinth you are at all events bound by treaty, but with Corcyra you never even entered into a temporary negotiation. And do not set the precedent of receiving the rebellious subjects of others. At the revolt of Samos, when the other Peloponnesians were divided upon the question of giving aid to the rebels, we voted in your favour and expressly maintained "that every one should be allowed to chastise his own allies." If you mean to receive and assist evil-doers, we shall assuredly gain as many allies of yours as you will of ours; and you will establish a prin-

ciple which will tell against yourselves more than against us

The funeral oration of Pericles.

Here there is but one idea, with a few appendages. The same criticism applies to most chapters in these speeches, and if we take up the most famous of them, the "Epitaphios" or funeral laudation put into the mouth of Pericles,† we shall be surprised at the crankiness, the vagueness, and even the want of tact which it frequently displays. Nevertheless it is not without a certain grave dignity, and this quality it is which has obtained for Thucydides a permanent hearing and a high respect in all literary ages. The high standard of political self-denial, of self-sacrifice for the glory of his country, which he sets forth, has something splendid about it, and there are occasional flashes of felicitous phrase, as there are even in Mr. Meredith's novels.‡

The style of Sophocles.

Much of this criticism, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to the historian's greatest contemporary, Sophocles. r we can hardly consider Æschylus's literary activity coinciding with his younger rivals. Sophocles is ery great poet; he has many of the highest qualities; tragedies will never cease to be quoted as the noblest om of Periclean Athens; but there can be no doubt whatever that his style reflects the current taste for subtlety and obscurity, that his vocabulary was anything but pure, and that his earlier works at least retained much of the harshness of the new vintage.|| Here again we have an author quite beyond translation, even though the reader will find that Mr. Whitelaw's version, among many good ones, is a wonderful attempt to transfer the

It reflects the current taste for subtlety.

* Thucydides I., Chaps. XXXIX.-XL. Jowett's translation.

† Book II., Chaps. XXXV.-XLVI.

‡ Indeed, if Mr. Meredith were set himself to translate the speeches of Thucydides we might expect a remarkably faithful version in the higher sense, not word for word, but spirit for spirit.

|| The reader will find the facts which support these views in the chapter on Sophocles in my "Greek Literature."

Attic bee into a foreign land. The reason why Euripides, an inferior poet, though a greater thinker, was so frequently successful in his day, and presently ousted both Æschylus and Sophocles from public favour, is that he made his diction pure and his style clear, and so spoke to the larger public that had not been trained in all the subtleties and the cleverness of the over-refined Attic public.

Sophocles contrasted with Euripides.

There is reason to think that the strain upon the social life at Athens must have been very great, during the period of its brilliance. A large imperial policy, an extended commercial activity, the training of a navy to sweep the seas, the practice of an oratory to astonish the audience, and last, but not least, the rebuilding of the city to appear worthy of its greatness—all this must have kept things going at a fever heat, and Plutarch, our only informant concerning the art side, notices specially the extraordinary expedition with which the great buildings of the time were erected. Yet so far as we know them, they seem erected to last forever. Dr. Dörpfeld, walking with me about the Parthenon, remarked that in his mind — he was a professional architect — such a building could never again, and ought never again, be created. The beauty and perfection of all the invisible parts are such that the cost of labour and money must be enormous. There is no show whatever for much of this extraordinary finish, which can only be seen by going up on the roof, or by opening a wall. It is a building like that very religious building of the twelfth century, when artists worked absolutely for the glory of God and for the salvation of their souls, without regarding whether their work was ever to be seen of men. Yet, in both cases, the religiousness of the unseen work has secured that what is seen shall

Feverish activity of Athenian life at this period.

The costly perfection of the Parthenon.

be perfect with no ordinary perfection. It is well worth quoting the remarkable passage in Plutarch's "Pericles," Chapters XII.–XIII., which gives us a vivid picture of the art policy of the great statesman.

Art policy of Pericles.

That which was the chief delight of the Athenians and the wonder of strangers, and which alone serves for a proof that the boasted power and opulence of ancient Greece is not an idle tale, was the magnificence of the temples and public edifices. Yet no part of the conduct of Pericles moved the spleen of his enemies more than this. In their accusations of him to the people they insisted, "That he had brought the greatest disgrace on the Athenians by removing the public treasures of Greece from Delos, and taking them into his own custody; that he had not left himself even the specious apology of having caused the money to be brought to Athens for its greater security, and to keep it from being seized by the barbarians; that Greece must needs consider it as the highest insult, and an act of open tyranny, when she saw the money she had been obliged to contribute toward the war lavished by the Athenians in gilding their city, and ornamenting it with statues and temples that cost a thousand talents, as a proud and vain woman decks herself out with jewels." Pericles answered this charge by observing, "That they were not obliged to give the allies any account of the sums they had received, since they had kept the barbarians at a distance, and effectually defended the allies, who had not furnished either horses, ships, or men, but only contributed money, which is no longer the property of the giver, but of the receiver, if he performs the conditions on which it is received. That as the state was provided with all the necessaries of war, its superfluous wealth should be laid out on such works as, when executed, would be eternal monuments of its glory, and which, during their execution, would diffuse a universal plenty; for as so many kinds of labour and such a variety of instruments and materials were requisite to these undertakings, every art would be exerted, every hand employed, almost the whole city would be in pay, and be at the same time both adorned and supported by itself." Indeed, such as were of a proper age and strength, were wanted for the wars, and well rewarded for their services; and as for the mechanics

Pericles's answer to his enemies.

and meaner sort of people, they went not without their share of the public money nor yet had they it to support them in idleness. By the constructing of great edifices, which required many arts and a long time to finish them, they had equal pretensions to be considered out of the treasury (though they stirred not out of the city) with the mariners and soldiers, guards and garrisons; for the different materials, such as stone, brass, ivory, gold, ebony, and cypress, furnished employment to carpenters, masons, brasiers, goldsmiths, painters, turners, and other artificers; the conveyance of them by sea employed merchants and sailors, and by land wheelwrights, waggoners, carriers, rope-makers, leather-cutters, paviors, and iron-founders; and every art had a number of the lower people ranged in proper subordination to execute it like soldiers under the command of a general. Thus by the exercise of these different trades, plenty was diffused among persons of every rank and condition. Thus works were raised of an astonishing magnitude and inimitable beauty and perfection, every architect striving to surpass the magnificence of the design with the elegance of the execution; yet still the most wonderful circumstance was the expedition with which they were completed. Many edifices, each of which seems to have required the labour of several successive ages, were finished during the administration of one prosperous man. It is said that when Agatharchus, the painter, valued himself on the celerity and ease with which he despatched his pieces, Zeuxis replied: "If I boast, it shall be of the slowness with which I finish mine"; for ease and speed in the execution seldom give a work any lasting importance, or exquisite beauty; while, on the other hand, the time which is expended in labour, is recovered and repaid in the duration of the performance. Hence we have the more reason to wonder that the structures raised by Pericles should be built in so short a time, and yet built for ages; for as each of them, as soon as finished, had the venerable air of antiquity; so, now they are old, they have the freshness of a modern building. A bloom is diffused over them, which preserves their aspect untarnished by time, as if they were animate with a spirit of perpetual youth and unfading elegance. Phidias was appointed by Pericles superintendent of all the public edifices, though the Athenians had then other eminent architects and excellent workmen. The

Encouragement to trade given by building.

The answer of Zeuxis.

The Parthenon. Parthenon, or Temple of Pallas, whose dimensions had been a hundred feet square, was rebuilt by Callicrates and Ictinus. . .

The long wall. The long wall, the building of which Socrates says he heard Pericles propose to the people, was undertaken by Callicrates. Cratinus ridicules this work as proceeding very slowly:

"Stones upon stones the orator has piled,
With swelling words, but words will build no walls."

The Odeum. The Odeum or music theater, which was likewise built by the direction of Pericles, had within it many rows of seats and of pillars; the roof was of a conic figure, after the model, we are told, of the king of Persia's pavilion. Cratinus therefore rallies him again in his play called "Thrattæ":

"As Jove, an onion on his head he wears;
As Pericles, a whole orchestra bears;
Afraid of broils and banishment no more,
He tunes the shell he trembled at before."

Encouragement of music by Pericles. Pericles at this time exerted all his interest to have a decree made, appointing a prize for the best performer in music during the Panathenæa; and, as he himself was appointed judge and distributor of the prizes, he gave the contending artists directions in what manner to proceed, whether their performance was vocal or on the flute or lyre. From that time the prizes in music were always contended for in the Odeum. The vestibule of the citadel was finished in five years by Mnesicles the architect.*

Perfect proportion of the Parthenon. The group of buildings on the Acropolis of Athens, which all date from this golden epoch, is certainly the most perfect and beautiful in the world. They are not very large; hugeness was no object to the builders; and how well these men understood the permanent laws of art is manifest from this fact, that no hugeness dwarfs their buildings by comparison; no vastness makes them look smaller than is required for perfect beauty. Come if you like fresh from St. Peter's at Rome, or from the Pont-du-Gard at Nîmes, or from the colossal halls of the

* Plutarch, "Pericles," Langhorne's translation.

great temple at Luxor, and tell me if you feel the Parthenon small or insignificant. So it is with the question of richness. No display of ornament will make it look poor, even now in its ruin, when its colours are long since faded and gone. Come fresh from St. Mark's at Venice or from the Pavian Certosa, and tell me whether the remaining ornament seems to you inadequate.

Effect of symmetry produced by curves.

We now know that the marvellous symmetry of the Parthenon is not attained by setting up a four-square building of very precious stone, with carved decorations of great beauty. Far from being what ignorant observers imagine, an affair of straight lines, there is not, so far as I know, a single straight line in the whole structure. The floor is slightly arched up, very slightly, and not merely to cause rain to run off, for all the other surfaces are also curved. The pillars are not set at equal intervals, but closer together near the corner of the building. The shafts swell toward the middle, none of them stand perpendicular, but slightly inclined inwards. We know from comparing modern buildings in that style, which do not observe this law, that a row of perpendicular pillars seems to splay outward at either end of the row. This was what Ictinus chose to avoid. The upper horizontal lines of the architrave are likewise curved, to avoid a similar unpleasant illusion of the eye, and all these delicate variations from the right line are constructed as the arcs of vast circles standing in fixed relations. The ornament consisted of carving done by the school of Phidias, and colouring of this and all the building; for the Athenians had no esteem for white marble as a surface; in a statue its coldness would have been most repulsive to them. But the colour is gone, or rather all the various colours have given place to that beautiful gold brown with which the Attic dust of ages

Use of colour on the carving.

has stained the once painted marble. When new fragments are dug up in modern excavations, the traces of bright colour, green, blue, gold, red, are usually there. As regards the sculpture, which consist of pediments (gable groups), the frieze (cornice) along the main wall, and metopes (originally plaques to stop the holes between the ends of the roof beams), they are so well known that they need not here be described, especially as they fill the principal chapter in every work on Greek art.

Erechtheum.

Not less perfect than the Parthenon is the far smaller, but even richer Erechtheum, where the pillars with their inward trend are most gracefully replaced by Caryatides, women with sacred baskets upon their heads, who rest each upon the foot nearest the centre, thus producing the effect intended by a mere natural pose.

We should willingly give away all the speeches in Thucydides to have some account of the studios in which Phidias the sculptor and Ictinus the architect devised and executed these marvellous plans. The stone was brought from the marble quarries of Mount Pentelicus—we can still trace the road, and we can wonder at the huge cuttings in the mountain, some ten miles north of Athens. They had no explosive to separate the blocks, they had no instruments comparable to ours. But with simple tools and unlimited slave labour they carried down beams and blocks of marble often thirty feet long and hundreds of tons in weight; they carried them up the steep incline to the plateau of the rock; there they carved them, and then lifted them thirty or forty feet into the air into their places. In a few years, Plutarch tells us, the Parthenon was completed by these processes, and even now the joinings and fittings of the stones, the accuracy of their placement, the beams of

Material difficulties overcome.

twenty-five feet long spanning the top of a doorway over the supporting pillars, the drums of pillars set upon drums, with the fluting so fitted that the joining is often not even visible, the figures more perfect than any modern can design, grouped as no modern can group them, set by way of mere ornament so high on a wall that their subtle refinement only produces a general effect—all this wealth of knowledge, this lavishing of wealth, this mutual perfection of material design and execution, is such that the longer and better we study it, the greater and more superhuman it appears.

Preëminence of Periclean period in art and literature.

In art, therefore, we may maintain without the smallest fear of contradiction that the modern world with all its inventions has not even approached the perfection of this golden age. In literature also, and perhaps in international politics and diplomacy, we may hold that our present state is a new growth from the barbarism of the dark ages, which has exceeded in quantity, but not in quality, what the Athenians had attained.

The great problem how far those who have voluntarily entered into a confederacy, and prospered as members of it, are entitled in future time to withdraw from it, and so break up a league from which not only they but the other members are deriving great benefit, is a question constantly before the Greek politicians in this and the next century. The instinct of the predominant partner was to hold such a league together by force, and to refuse to allow allies or subjects who had agreed to certain terms any liberty in rejecting them. This is asserted over and over again by Athenians and others in the discussions which Thucydides composes for them.

Struggle of Greek allies for autonomy.

On the other hand, there was a strong and indelible instinct of autonomy, or the claim to manage their own

affairs, in all the Hellenic polities, however small; and this was the feeling which made an attack upon any such empire, or more properly, *hegemony*, of Athenians, Spartans, or Thebans, popular in Greece. It was the very same problem as that which agitated America at the opening of the great Civil War thirty years ago. Were the states which were the mothers of the Union bound forever to remain in that Union, even if what they held to be their state liberties were violated? Whatever might have been the rights of those states which were daughters of the Union, the original partners seemed to have an indefeasible right of withdrawing, if the terms of the original contract were violated.

Slavery main cause of low standard of morality.

Our real superiority lies in our moral ideals, in our philanthropy, our care of the poor and the sick, very probably in our developed notions of humanity. I do not know whether the existence and justification of slavery as a national institution are not the main cause of this difference. In all slave-holding societies the feelings of the slave are violated by the will or the caprice of the master. Even as nowadays men will not hesitate to sacrifice domestic animals to their convenience, so will they sacrifice their slaves. As far as securing leisure to the free, as far as saving them from drudgery, slavery generally conduces to refinement of manners and elegance of life in the dominating class. But if any pressing need occurs, the lives of slaves will be sacrificed without scruple, and the habit of so doing cannot but react upon the morals of the masters, and make them callous in other cases where humanity is involved. This we see in the best and foremost Greek society of this period. How many slaves were sacrificed to the hurry of building the Parthenon we shall never know. In the silver mines of Laurium it would seem

Callous and brutal attitude to slaves and prisoners.

that two years was the average life of a workman. But the treatment of prisoners is constantly stated to us. Very frequently the adult male prisoners, especially if they belonged to a hated rival city, were massacred in cold blood, nor did the refinement manifested by the companions of Pericles and Phidias revolt from these butcheries. The women and children were made slaves, and if not ransomed, became the chattels of the victors. The honour of a woman who was even a temporary prisoner was no more respected than her purse, nor was such a misfortune, which often happened, considered as in any way ruining her reputation. We have this indeed explicitly from Xenophon, a generation later than that now under consideration. But if it was true then, it must have been true ten times more in the colder, harsher, and more selfish society of Antiphon, Thucydides, Alcibiades, and Lysander. The milk of human kindness seems to have run dry among them. Even in the Attic comedy of the day, the brilliant and genial Aristophanes seldom paints this feature.

Frequent massacres of male prisoners.

So far, then, the association of the good with the beautiful and the true seems incomplete. The latter two are attained in no ordinary degree. The former, which is to us the most divine of the three, was but poorly represented.

The beautiful not necessarily identical with the good or true.

The whole policy of Athens as drawn by its great historian Thucydides is as repulsive as the figures of the Olympian gods drawn by Homer.* He tells us in a singular passage that it was the great Peloponnesian War which ruined the public morals of the nation, and though this statement is untrue, for we know of the same vices rampant at earlier epochs, the picture he draws offers so curious and dark a shadow to the brilliancy of

* This subject is treated in the early chapters of my "Social Life in Greece."

the art side of this life that we shall do well to quote it.

Disastrous effect of Peloponnesian War on Athenian morals.

For not long afterwards the whole Hellenic world was in commotion, in every city the chiefs of the democracy and of the oligarchy were struggling, the one to bring in the Athenians, the other the Lacedæmonians. Now, in time of peace, men would have had no excuse for introducing either, and no desire to do so, but when they were at war and both sides could easily obtain allies to the hurt of their enemies and the advantage of themselves, the dissatisfied party were only too ready to invoke foreign aid. And revolution brought upon the cities of Hellas many terrible calamities, such as have been and always will be while human nature remains the same, but which are more or less aggravated and differ in character with every new combination of circumstances. In peace and prosperity both states and individuals are actuated by higher motives, because they do not fall under the dominion of imperious necessities; but war, which takes away the comfortable provision of daily life, is a hard master, and tends to assimilate men's characters to their conditions.

Description from Thucydides of Greek avarice and ambition.

When troubles had once begun in the cities, those who followed carried the revolutionary spirit further and further, and determined to outdo the report of all who had preceded them by the ingenuity of their enterprises and the atrocity of their revenges. The meaning of words had no longer the same relation to things, but was changed by them as they thought proper. Reckless daring was held to be loyal courage; prudent delay was the excuse of a coward; moderation was the disguise of unmanly weakness; to know everything was to do nothing. Frantic energy was the true quality of a man. A conspirator who wanted to be safe was a recreant in disguise. The lover of violence was always trusted, and his opponent suspected. He who succeeded in a plot was deemed knowing, but a still greater master in craft was he who detected one. On the other hand, he who plotted from the first to have nothing to do with plots was a breaker up of parties and a poltroon who was afraid of the enemy. In a word, he who could outstrip another in a bad action was applauded, and so was he who encouraged to evil one who had no idea of it. The tie of party was stronger than the tie of blood, because a partisan was more ready to dare without asking why. (For

party associations are not based upon any established law, nor do they seek the public good; they are formed in defiance of the laws and from self-interest.) The seal of good faith was not divine law, but fellowship in crime. If an enemy when he was in the ascendant offered fair words, the opposite party received them not in a generous spirit, but by a jealous watchfulness of his actions. Revenge was dearer than self-preservation. Any agreements sworn to by either party, when they could do nothing else, were binding as long as both were powerless. But he who on a favourable opportunity first took courage and struck at his enemy when he saw him off his guard, had greater pleasure in a perfidious than he would have had in an open act of revenge; he congratulated himself that he had taken the safer course, and also that he had overreached his enemy and gained the prize of superior ability. In general, the dishonest more easily gain credit for cleverness than the simple for goodness—men take a pride in the one, but are ashamed of the other.

The evils of party spirit.

The cause of all these evils was the love of power, originating in avarice and ambition, and the party spirit which is engendered by them when men are fairly embarked in a contest. For the leaders on either side used specious names, the one party professing to uphold the constitutional equality of the many, the other the wisdom of an aristocracy, while they made the public interests, to which in name they were devoted, in reality their prize. Striving in every way to overcome each other, they committed the most monstrous crimes; yet even these were surpassed by the magnitude of their revenges, which they pursued to the very utmost, neither party observing any definite limits either of justice or public expediency, but both alike making the caprice of the moment their law. Either by the help of an unrighteous sentence, or grasping power with the strong hand, they were eager to satiate the impatience of party spirit. Neither faction cared for religion; but any fair pretence which succeeded in effecting some odious purpose was greatly lauded. And the citizens who were of neither party fell a prey to both; either they were disliked because they held aloof, or men were jealous of their surviving.

Revolution the cause of degeneration.

Thus revolution gave birth to every form of wickedness in Hellas. The simplicity which is so large an element in a noble

nature was laughed to scorn and disappeared. An attitude of perfidious antagonism everywhere prevailed; for there was no word binding enough nor oath terrible enough to reconcile enemies. Each man was strong only in the conviction that nothing was secure; he must look to his own safety, and could not afford to trust others. Inferior intellects generally succeeded best. For, aware of their own deficiencies, and fearing the capacity of their opponents, for whom they were no match in powers of speech, and whose subtle wits were likely to anticipate them in contriving evil, they struck boldly and at once. But the cleverer sort, presuming in their arrogance that they would be aware in time, and disdaining to act when they could think, were taken off their guard and easily destroyed.*

The brutal and selfish foreign policy of Athens.

All these evils are, however, set forth in connection with the hideous massacres at Corcyra, an outlying and not very respectable part of the Greek world. Thucydides in due time lets us know that as far as principles went the Athenians were no better. He has put into their mouths a dialogue with the Melians, whose island they desired to take, which may indeed not be historically accurate—there was no reporter present to take it down and bring it to the historian—but which expresses his opinion of the motives which led to the cruel treatment of these islanders. There is no more shocking instance of cold-blooded cynicism in all Greek history.

Dialogue from Thucydides.

Athenians. Well then, we Athenians will use no fine words; we will not go out of our way to prove at length that we have a right to rule, because we overthrew the Persians; or that we attack you now because we are suffering any injury at your hands. We should not convince you if we did; nor must you expect to convince us by arguing that, although a colony of the Lacedæmonians, you have taken no part in their expeditions, or that you have never done us any wrong. But you and we should say what we really think, and aim only at what is possible, for we both alike know that into the discussion

* Thucydides III., Chaps. LXXXII.-LXXXIII. Jowett.

of human affairs the question of justice only enters where the pressure of necessity is equal, and that the powerful exact what they can, and the weak grant what they must.

Melians. Well then, since you set aside justice and invite us to speak of expediency, in our judgment it is certainly expedient that you should respect a principle which is for the common good; and that to every man when in peril a reasonable claim should be accounted a claim of right, and any plea which he is disposed to urge, even if failing of the point a little, should help his cause. Your interest in this principle is quite as great as ours, inasmuch as you, if you fall, will incur the heaviest vengeance, and will be the most terrible example to mankind. Might is right.

Ath. The fall of our empire, if it should fall, is not an event to which we look forward with dismay; for ruling states such as Lacedæmon are not cruel to their vanquished enemies. And we are fighting not so much against the Lacedæmonians, as against our own subjects who may some day rise up and overcome their former masters. But this is a danger which you may leave to us. And we will now endeavour to show that we have come in the interests of our empire, and that in what we are about to say we are only seeking the preservation of your city. For we want to make you ours with the least trouble to ourselves, and it is for the interests of us both that you should not be destroyed.

Mel. It may be your interest to be our masters, but how can it be ours to be your slaves?

Ath. To you the gain will be that by submission you will avert the worst; and we shall be all the richer for your preservation.

Mel. But must we be your enemies? Will you not receive us as friends if we are neutral and remain at peace with you? Selfish arguments of the Athenians.

Ath. No, your enmity is not half so mischievous to us as your friendship; for the one is in the eyes of our subjects an argument of our power, the other of our weakness.

Mel. But are your subjects really unable to distinguish between states in which you have no concern, and those which are chiefly your own colonies, and in some cases have revolted and been subdued by you?

Ath. Why, they do not doubt that both of them have a good deal to say for themselves on the score of justice,

but they think that states like yours are left free because they are able to defend themselves and that we do not attack them because we dare not. So that your subjection will give us an increase of security, as well as an extension of empire. For we are masters of the sea, and you who are islanders, and insignificant islanders too, must not be allowed to escape us.

Mel. But do you not recognize another danger? For, once more, since you drive us from the plea of justice and press upon us your doctrine of expediency, we must show you what is for our interest, and, if it be for yours also, may hope to convince you: Will you not be making enemies of all who are now neutrals? When they see how you are treating us they will expect you some day to turn against them; and if so, are you not strengthening the enemies whom you already have, and bringing upon you others who, if they could help, would never dream of being your enemies at all?

The real enemies of Athens are the islanders.

Ath. We do not consider our really dangerous enemies to be any of the peoples inhabiting the mainland who, secure in their freedom, may defer indefinitely any measures of precaution which they take against us, but islanders who, like you, happen to be under no control, and all who may be already irritated by the necessity of submission to our empire—these are our real enemies, for they are the most reckless and most likely to bring themselves as well as us into a danger which they cannot but foresee.

Mel. Surely then, if you and your subjects will brave all this risk, you to preserve your empire and they to be quit of it, how base and cowardly would it be in us, who retain our freedom, not to do and suffer anything rather than be your slaves.

Ath. Not so, if you calmly reflect; for you are not fighting against equals to whom you cannot yield without disgrace, but you are taking counsel whether or no you shall resist an overwhelming force. The question is not one of honour but of prudence. *

Thucydides's view of the causes of the Athenian downfall.

Historians tell us that Thucydides was a tragedian in prose, that he desired to expose the cruelty and selfishness of Athens as the moral cause of the great disaster

* Thucydides V., Chaps. LXXXIX-CI. Jowett.

in Sicily, which occupies his succeeding books. There is no satisfactory evidence of any such conception. He seems rather to hold that with the death of Pericles all sound imperial policy departed from Athens, that demagogues either incompetent or corrupt, or both, led the people, and made those grave mistakes which caused the really superior power of Athens, based on money and ships, to be overthrown by Sparta. As misfortune would have it, Sparta did not win under the chivalrous Brasidas, or the noble Callicratidas, but under the cruel and selfish Lysander, whose massacre of several thousand prisoners on the shore of the Hellespont after the battle of Ægospotami is one of the most horrible facts in Hellenic life. Even the Syracusans, when they had conquered with great difficulty a wanton invasion from Athens, at least kept their many prisoners alive, with a possibility of ransom. They are said to have released those who were able to recite portions of the plays of Euripides,* the rising star before which that of Æschylus had set, and even that of Sophocles had declined.

Thucydides's admiration for Pericles as a statesman.

Popularity of Euripides.

In the middle of this harsh and bitter age, when a long and bloody war, which might well be called a civil war in character, had made men's tempers as hard as their circumstances, when all the finer and more delicate feelings seemed to be swallowed up by lust of power, revenge for wrongs, ambition, greed, selfishness, there were at least two men standing aloof from the all-absorbing politics of the day, and teaching each in their way a larger faith and purer morals. These were Euripides and Socrates. Both found it necessary to break with the established beliefs in religion, because they were inspired to preach higher morals. Both were

Euripides and Socrates as moral teachers.

* This is the frame of the story of Browning's "Balaustion's Adventure."

Euripides and Socrates are attacked as rationalists.

attacked as rationalists who undermined faith, and with faith morals. Both protested that they only criticised faith so far as it was absolutely necessary to uphold morals. The poet upon his stage, painting the vices of men and the virtues of women, the passion of both, preached a larger and kindlier estimate of human nature than the hard politicians would admit. Humanity indeed in all its better phases, especially the loyalty and nobility of the poor and the slave, is in Euripides a new and blessed conception amid the cruelties and the beauties of Attic life. His many innovations were regarded by the stricter school as decadences, his philosophy as out of place, his rehandling of sacred stories as irreligious; but Euripides knew better than his critics; he stood at the close of an epoch brilliant indeed, but not destined to last, living upon an energy impossible to sustain, and when the crash came he survived, the poet and teacher of succeeding centuries.

Fragments of Euripides in Egypt.

When we now rake the sands of Egypt, and find fragments of the school-books, or the popular books which the Greeks under Alexander carried with them to their new homes, we find fragments of Euripides almost as common as fragments of Homer, which was then the Greek Bible, whereas those of Æschylus or Sophocles are most rare. It was doubtless on account of his cosmopolitanism, his greater clearness, his simple language, his rather Hellenic than Attic spirit, that he satisfied men who could not brook the pomp of Æschylus or the subtlety of Sophocles. His philosophy, too, a gentle pessimism, was more confined to the days of Greek decadence, when the extravagant hopes and splendid performance of Periclean Athens were things of the past. Many of his lyrical passages, too, were capable of quite general application, and could be sung, as modern

Reasons for his popularity.

lyrics are, apart from the stage and its accessories.

Here, for example, is an ode translated for me by Robert Browning, and which I gladly repeat in this place:

Browning's translation of a Euripidean ode.

I.

Oh Love, Love, thou that from the eyes diffusest
Yearning, and on the soul sweet grace inducest--
Souls against whom thy hostile march is made—
Never to me be manifest in ire,
Nor, out of time and tune, my peace invade!
Since neither from the fire—
No, nor the stars—is launched a bolt more mighty
Than that of Aphrodité
Hurled from the hands of Love, the boy with Zeus for sire.

II.

Idly, how idly, by the Alpheian river
And in the Pythian shrines of Phœbus, quiver
Blood-offerings from the bull, which Hellas heaps:
While Love we worship not—the Lord of men!
Worship not him, the very key who keeps
Of Aphrodité, when
She closes up her dearest chamber-portals:
——Love, when he comes to mortals,
Wide-wasting, through those deeps of woes beyond the deep!

Browning's translations of Euripides's plays.

This great poet has had in our time the good fortune to fall into Browning's hands, and two plays at least, with many fragments, can be studied better than other Greek masterpieces in his "Balaustion's Adventure" (the "Alcestis") and Aristophanes's "Apology" (the "Mad Heracles"). The latter version is far the more perfect, for he has here rendered the lyrical odes in lyrical metres, whereas in the "Alcestis" he has given them all in his halting blank verse, which does not represent the variety and beauty of the original metres. But both are the work of a poet appreciating a poet, and as

such have but few rivals among our Anglo-Greek books.

We pass on to the other capital figure in Periclean Athens, who lived, like Euripides, to see the debacle, but was the second great force which led to a brilliant regeneration in the succeeding century. If Euripides was a rationalist, how much more was Socrates a rationalist; if Euripides, amid the scepticism which follows upon the criticism of a false and absurd religion, was still a serious and pious man, how much more so was Socrates. He set himself to work against the brilliant superficial teachers of practical politics, called "Sophists," who trained men in argument but not in principles, and sought in debate only victory, not truth. But to Socrates principle was everything. He knew no fear, he recoiled from no hardship, he was tainted with no ambition; he lived and died for his convictions, preaching that truth, and the clear knowing of it, was the only fit occupation of men.

Socrates as a teacher of morality.

But in him the beautiful which had been the glory of the Periclean age gave way utterly to another beauty, the beauty of goodness. He found, as he believed, the real nexus between those great ideas, and it is from his time onward that every noble thinker has essayed to attain them in his conception of the Deity. It was said that he brought down philosophy from heaven to dwell among men. Perhaps it would be truer to say that he raised man from the earth to dwell in heaven. Still more true was it that he brought philosophy from Ionia, from Sicily, and from Magna Græcia, to dwell at Athens. He was himself no ascetic; he did not eschew the pleasures of the body, but every pleasure and every relaxation he subordinated to the one great object, to maintain his own moral dignity and purity, and to promote these same virtues among others.

His doctrine of the beauty of goodness.

It wearies the modern reader, often enough, to read how he endeavoured to preach his great doctrine. He cross-examined those whom he met, beginning from simple and perfectly obvious questions, and leading up gradually to perplexities, from which he did not always show an escape. The reason of this curious and often tedious method was that moral obligations in his day were by no means so clearly defined as they now are. There was nothing comparable to the teaching of Christ, upon which our laws and our religion are now based. Concerning many vital points men were still hesitating as regards their moral duty. If a man's father murdered a slave, thus exhibiting the vice of cruelty, was the son bound to use every effort to bring the murderer under the cognizance of the law, or was he bound to refrain on the ground of filial piety—in other words, was the duty of a son to his father, or the duty of a citizen to the state the more paramount? Here is one of the many problems which Socrates raised and discussed.* He desired to clear the moral air, to remove prejudices, misconceptions, vagueness, and make men understand clearly that the highest and only sure happiness was the practice of virtue, the only wisdom to walk according to the direction of conscience. He left no writings behind him; he was put to death by the verdict of a jury of his countrymen, who believed him to have raised sceptical doubts in the minds of men. No doubt he had. So did Jesus Christ; so did Martin Luther; so did John Huss. But sceptical doubts about what? about errors and superstitions which had laid firm hold on the minds of men, and required a mighty wizard to break the chain of their enchantment.

Socrates's dialectical method.

Moral problems discussed by Socrates.

The alleged scepticism of Socrates.

*In the dialogue called "Euthyphron," which proper name means "the right-minded." This is the prose analogon to the problem of Orestes and of Hamlet already discussed in connection with Æschylus.

Lesson taught by Socrates's life and death.

The effect of this upon the culture of Athens, and through his pupils upon the culture of many Greek cities, must have been immense. It was now felt that enlightenment meant not cheap scepticism, but deeper knowledge ; that there was a human nature deeper and more permanent than the types perpetuated as ideal in the poetry and mythology of the ancients. Not Apollo, not Athene, had the dignity and the strength of the human sage. His very death was a greater lesson than his life. For both before his judges and before his friends he maintained clearly that after this life a good man will receive either the reward of greater happiness, or the eternal sleep of annihilation. In no case will his pains and imperfections be perpetuated. And if there be indeed a divine spark in the soul of man, we may hope for a return of this higher element to its home, and a future blessedness in the purity of eternal light.

Athenian attitude to death.

The deep consolations of this noble teaching cannot be fully appreciated till we understand the popular attitude toward death among the Athenians of his day. We have not indeed the complaints, the despair, the gloom of the average people recorded in any book. But there still remains to us very curious evidence in the many tombstones with sculptured reliefs which are found in the Ceramicus at the west end of Athens during recent years, and are now the ornament of the Great Museum.

Evidence from tombstones.

I cannot do better than repeat here what I wrote years ago, when first I was brought face to face with these curious and very affecting memorials of a nation's grief.

It seems to me that the tombs before us are remarkable as exemplifying, with the tact of genius, this true and perfect reserve. They are simple pictures of the grief of parting—of

the recollection of pleasant days of love and friendship—of the gloom of the unknown future. But there is no exaggeration, nor speciality—no individuality, I had almost said—in the picture. I feel no curiosity to inquire who these people are—what were their names—even what was the relationship of the deceased. For I am perfectly satisfied with an ideal portrait of the grief of parting—a grief that comes to us all, and lays bitter hold of us at some season of life; and it is this universal sorrow—this great common plan in our lives—which the Greek artist has brought before us, and which calls forth our deepest sympathy. There will be further occasion to come back upon this all-important feature in connection with the *action* in Greek sculpture, and even with the draping of their statues—in all of which the calm and chaste reserve of the better Greek art contrasts strangely with the Michael Angelos and Berninis and Canovas of other days; nay, even with the Greek sculpture of a no less brilliant but less refined age.

The idealism of Greek sepulchral art.

But in concluding this digression I will call attention to a modern parallel in the portraiture of grief, and of grief at final parting. This parallel is not a piece of sculpture, but a poem, perhaps the most remarkable poem of our generation—the "In Memoriam" of Lord Tennyson. Though written from personal feeling, and to commemorate a special person—Arthur Hallam—whom some of us even knew, has this poem laid hold of the imagination of men strongly and lastingly owing to the poet's special loss? Certainly not. I do not even think that this great dirge—this magnificent funeral poem—has excited in most of us any strong interest in Arthur Hallam. In fact, any other friend of the poet's would have suited the general reader equally well as the exciting cause of a poem, which we delight in, because it puts into great words the ever-recurring and permanent features in such grief—those dark longings about the future; those suggestions of despair, of discontent with the providence of the world, of wild speculation about its laws; those struggles to reconcile our own loss, and that of the human race, with some larger law of wisdom and of benevolence. To the poet, of course, his own particular friend was the great centre point of the whole. But to us, in reading it, there is a wide distinction between the personal passages—I mean those which give family details and special circumstances in Hallam's life, or his intimacy with the poet—and the purely

Modern literary parallel for its universality.

Tennyson's "In Memoriam."

The "In Memoriam" deals with universal world-problems.

poetical or artistic passages, which soar away into a region far above all special detail, and sing of the great gloom which hangs over the future, and of the vehement beating of the human soul against the bars of its prison house, when one is taken, and another left, not merely at apparent random, but with apparent injustice and damage to mankind. Hence every man in grief for a lost friend will read the poem to his great comfort, and will then only see clearly what it means; and he will find it speak to him specially and particularly, not in its personal passages, but in its general features; in its hard metaphysics; in its mystical theology; in its angry and uncertain ethics. For even the commonest mind is forced by grief out of its commonness, and attacks the world-problems, which at other times it has no power or taste to approach.*

It is indeed certain that many of them date from the succeeding generations; but the type was created at the moment when sculptors had vanquished all their difficulties, and felt themselves perfectly able to give expression to the emotions in unfeeling marble. When once established, the type of this work continued unvaried in sentiment, while the higher minds were finding higher consolations and better memorials to record their impressions of death and of bereavement. It was the utter sadness of men without hope, the dreary future in the meadow of asphodel, which Socrates and his followers combated, showing that while a good life was an end in itself, not cut short but completed by a death of calmness and resignation, the future life could bring no terrors to the righteous, even if it were not a crown and culmination to their yet imperfect happiness.

Socrates's teaching that death has no terrors for the good.

* "Rambles and Studies in Greece," pages 74-5 (4th edition).

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOURTH CENTURY B. C.

WE pass to the culture of the succeeding century, when, with the fall of Athenian pride, the age of poetry was gone, the chain of great tragic poets was broken, the piety of the choral ode antiquated ; when philosophy and oratory aided history to establish new models in literature, and create in Greek prose a standard not less perfect and many-sided than that attained in earlier days by Greek poetry. At the very opening of this century, the moment of the Restoration (of the democracy) at Athens, we have the pupils of Socrates in philosophy, the pupils of Antiphon in oratory, the pupils, or successors, of Thucydides in history, all vying with each other to make each branch of their art perfect in its way. No doubt the failure of the Athenian Empire and the consequent greater equality among Greek cities also gave a more cosmopolitan tone to this prose epoch. Xenophon is a regular man of the world, living, from choice or necessity, most of his life abroad. Plato was not like Socrates, addicted to Athens ; it is the orators only who preserve the strict traditions of Attic life, and write for the Attic public. But let us turn for a moment to the only form of poetry that still flourished—comedy.

Literature after the fall of the Athenian Empire.

The comedy of Aristophanes and his rivals shows the jocose and ribald side of the most brilliant Periclean life. Beautiful hymns or odes, perfect in grace and refined in

Lyric poetry of Aristophanes.

Translation of an ode of Aristophanes.

diction, alternate with scurrilous lampoons and violent political attacks. The following ode will illustrate his lyric poetry :

ODE OF THE HOOPOE TO THE NIGHTINGALE.*

SISTER warbler, cease from slumber,
Pour thy holiest sweetest number ;
With thy heavenly voice bewail
Thy own sad Itys' tearful tale ;
Gushing forth the liquid note
Copious through thy yellow throat.
Clear and full the holy sound
Through the full-leaved ivy round
Soars away to Jove's high hall ;
Gold-haired Phœbus hears the call,
Hears and answers back again,
Mournful to the mournful strain.
He with ivory-gleaming lyre
Wakens all the immortal choir.
All the everlasting throng
Take up the song ;
The voices of the blest the full accord prolong

His picture of Periclean Athens.

What has been already said about the rest of I clean life is here also exemplified. Goodness as such plays but a small part in the poet's scenes. If he preaches honesty and truth against chicanery and selfishness, it is for the good of the state, for the political salvation of Athens, not because these qualities are in themselves honourable and of good report. His famous attack on Socrates (in the "Clouds") is a mis-

Conservatism of Aristophanes.

representation as gross as any ever perpetrated in American politics. He could only have defended it by its political expediency. He belonged to the old Conservative party, to whom this shaking of received truths, of traditional dogmas, was connected with radical poli-

* A translation of one of Aristophanes's lyrics. Milman, page 222.

tics, and with the rise of new ideas in morals and religion. Most of the dangerous young men at Athens, notably the ringleader of the Thirty Tyrants, Critias, were followers of the sage. This feature was enough in Aristophanes's mind to justify a wicked and false satire upon a great and good man.

Reasons for the change of spirit of comedy after Aristophanes.

It was this want of moral earnestness, as well as the local flavour of his plays, which made them distasteful to the public, as soon as the circumstances which explained their allusions and the political struggles which palliated their injustices had been forgotten. The tamer and better age of the Restoration required milder spiritual food, greater moral earnestness, and so, while the teaching of the virtues passed into the hands of philosophers and rhetoricians, the so-called Middle Comedy, to which Aristophanes's latest play, the "Plutus," approximates, adopted a very different, and a more cultivated tone. Classes of men and not individuals were criticised, literary and social ideals, not practical politics, were discussed; and although it may be seen that now and then, even in the hands of the very latest of the comic poets, personal lampoons were launched at the audience from the stage, the whole tone and temper show that license and scurrility were no longer thought amusing or in good taste. This is what we should expect from the age of Xenophon and Plato, Lysias and Isocrates.

Sparta fails to bear the test of prosperity.

The Spartans were now masters of the political world, and though all the theorists, as well as practical men like Xenophon, were dazzled with the tenacious and consistent method of life, which had attained the supremacy over brilliant Athens, the Spartans as a dominating society bore the test of prosperity and power very badly.

The writings of the cosmopolitan Xenophon.

The only writer who went about all over the Greek world and saw the ways and manners of men, the Ulysses of the fourth century B. C., was Xenophon, who has given us in his various writings his various ideals, such as they were successively presented to him. First comes Socrates the Athenian, whose "Memoirs" give us a picture of the man more realistic and possibly more true* than the dialogues of Plato. Then he comes into contact with the younger Cyrus, a great Persian prince, whose splendour and dignity, vastly beyond that of any Greek, so dazzle him that he paints the ideal monarch in his "Education of Cyrus." He removes his picture into the days of the older and greater king of the name; but it is quite certain that it was the brilliant, chivalrous prince under whom he fought at Cunaxa that suggested the work. Later in life he came within reach of the Spartan king Agesilaus, a man of considerable ability and long experience, but rather representing the average Spartan virtues than possessing any genius of his own. This man also becomes an ideal figure to Xenophon, who gives us through him a glance at the best sort of life in the leading city of Greece. These three figures, with their strong contrasts, their wide difference of surroundings, their totally distinct ideals of life and of morals, are the most remarkable legacy which this great writer has left us. His greatest blot is to have obscured for us, so far as he could, the majestic personality of the Theban Epaminondas, his greatest foible to have exaggerated his own importance as a military commander and a man of action. But here too lies his most brilliant literary success. His account of the ex-

His sketch of Socrates.

Of Cyrus.

Of Agesilaus.

His failure to appreciate Epaminondas.

*The Socrates who appeared in the streets, and was known to the public as a quaint figure with peculiar views—this outside Socrates is what we find in Xenophon. The ideal man, with his deep suggestions, even with the seed of his doctrine sown and bearing fruit, is what we find in Plato.

pedition to Babylonia, with the much more famous "Retreat of the Ten Thousand" narrated in the third person, has taken in the learned as well as the unlearned, and caused them to place this *condottiere*,* who never attained a high reputation in Greece, among the great commanders whose talents were not mistaken for a moment.

The "Retreat of the Ten Thousand."

But this is not the place to discuss such questions.† I would rather seek from the confessions of this remarkable man what he at least had attained in culture, and what he thought praiseworthy in the life of others.

It is very remarkable how little his early intercourse with Socrates affected him. He was an ambitious young man, seeking distinction and not finding scope for it in the now humbled and impoverished Athens. Moreover, he was not a good citizen, and very soon broke altogether with Athens, from which he was ultimately banished. So, like his ancestors and successors, he took to the profession of mercenary soldier. If Cyrus had not been killed at Cunaxa, Xenophon would have attained to high office in the East, and might have given us most curious knowledge concerning the life and manners of the Persian notables. But even as it was, he found that the so-called barbarians were in their nobler specimens not a whit inferior to the most polished Greeks, nay, rather, in splendour of ideas and richness of life far superior to anything that Greece could produce. The portrait of Cyrus in the "Anabasis," and that of his ancestor in the Educational Romance, show us that Xenophon found among the Persians his ideal of a great sovereign, nor can there be any more curious compari-

The checkered career of Xenophon.

Xenophon's ideal of a great sovereign derived from the Persians.

* I use this word as familiar to us from mediæval Italian history.

† I have done so in the chapter on Xenophon in my "History of Greek Literature."

son than that of Aristotle's picture of the "great-souled man" or ideal Greek, in the fourth book of his "Ethics," with the picture of the elder Cyrus in "Cyropædia." Greatness seems to sit artificially on Aristotle's man; "his voice must be deep, and his step slow," as if he were posing as a hero to his valet; greatness is traditional and natural to the Persian, with a chivalry and a generosity quite foreign to Greek ideas. It was not till Macedonian feudalism was combined with Greek culture that we have such a figure as that of Alexander, who at once feels that in Persia is the ideal of a sovereign and who treated the great oriental barons as we see depicted on the matchless sarcophagus of Sidon. In sport, in war, in courtesy, they are the full equals of Macedonians and Hellenes.

Nobility of Persian life and character.

By these experiences Xenophon became cosmopolitan, and shook off the narrowness and the conceit which still hung about Attic life. His very style proves it. He admits many words foreign to Attic use, and approaches the "common dialect," which in the next century leavened all the Hellenistic world. But as far as his own century was concerned, he seems to have thought that nothing was so noble as Spartan simplicity, nothing so expedient as Spartan discipline.

The style of Xenophon.

The upstart power of Thebes he evidently regarded with a strong dislike—Athens I know, and Sparta I know, but who are ye? And yet, in the midst of the rudeness and revelry attributed to the Bœotians sprang up a small society of men, led by the greatest genius of his century, and moreover a man as great in his refinement as in his military science. Before this personage the star of Agesilaus, Xenophon's hero, paled its ineffectual fire; the hope of the Spartan to follow the footsteps of Xenophon's mercenaries, and conquer a

His dislike of Thebes.

kingdom in Asia, gave way to a hopeless effort to hold the control of Greece against the power of Epaminondas; and so Xenophon, whose great hopes must always have lain in the direction of campaigns in Asia, was balked by the home complications, in which he could take no leading part. It remained for him to retire to his hunting-box in the wilds of Elis, not far from the Epsom of Greece, where he could meet all his scattered friends at the Olympic festival, and here he devoted himself to the amusements he had learned to love in Asia—hunting, training of horses and dogs, farming, and with these a prolonged and eminent literary activity.

Causes of Xenophon's retirement.

But are the ideals in these books those derived from Socrates? Far from it. Xenophon's religion is distinctly a bargain, a compact with the gods, as received by the vulgar public. If he offers them liberal sacrifices, they are bound on their side to secure him prosperity. Piety for its own sake seems strange to him. It is the same thing with domestic virtues. The young wife, whose education after her marriage is so graphically described in his "Œconomicus," is trained that she may be useful, and conduce to the peace and happiness of her husband, not that she may become in herself a nobler and better soul. Even then, as now, the fashionable young woman thought that yellow hair, rouge upon the face, and high-heeled shoes were requisite for the attainment of beauty—a theory which this model husband combats with arguments which seem ineffectual in the present day. Very sympathetic to us is his love of horses and of sport. He felt in his day the importance of cavalry, which the Greeks had neglected for want of means and for want of open country. But now that wars might any day be transferred to Asia, the

Xenophon's "Œconomicus."

His love of sport.

importance of cavalry was increased, and in the brilliant campaign of Agesilaus, nothing had been more decisive than his creation of a cavalry force, to meet the Persian satraps in the plains of Lydia. Xenophon's hunting was his great amusement, and he throws into it that seriousness and zeal which every sportsman from that day to this has manifested. He writes his tract on hunting the hare—a sport which he thinks more delightful than anything else in the world. When a man sees the dogs tracking, finding, coursing the animal, "he will forget that he ever loved anything else." How like the fox hunter of to-day! And as regards seriousness, he brought his practical piety into this important pursuit. When the hare's track is found, "having prayed to Apollo and to Artemis, let loose your best dog." This was the kind of life impossible in the thickly populated Attica; it had been one great cause of the vigour and the health of the Spartan youth. Xenophon felt as we do, that it produces not only physically, but morally, a type of man vastly superior to the athlete or the runner in competitive encounters. The Greeks were, on the whole, worse off than the English for field sports and exercises. Rowing, which is so prominent among us, was chiefly the work of slaves, and though in the Athenian navy the upper row of the trireme seems to have been worked by citizens, it was never the occupation of a gentleman, and the competitions of this kind which they had were rather between the rich men who manned and equipped ships for the state than for the crew. Fishing was always the occupation of the poor, nor do I suppose that Pelopidas or Epaminondas ever dreamt of going out in a boat to sport on the lake Copais, which occupies a large part of Bœotia, and was always celebrated for its fish. Training for athletic

Lack of field sports in Greece.

sports is a different kind of thing, and military leaders seem to have decided from early times that it was not serviceable for good soldiering.

Xenophon's appreciation of Spartan ideals.

On the whole, therefore, Xenophon, starting with an experience of Athens, seems to have come to the conclusion that the Spartan ideal of manhood, tempered with some additional education, was better than the exclusively town life of his native country. And so he approaches more nearly to the modern idea of a gentleman than the greatest of the Athenians.

Epaminondas the Bœotian.

We wish we could speak in this connection of Epaminondas and the Theban society which he led during his brilliant life, for here were combined some of the conditions of both Attic and Spartan life. The Bœotians belie, by the series of great men they produced from Hesiod to Plutarch, that they were the heavy and stupid population at whom the Attic peasant jeered as Bœotian swine. The culture of Pindar, of Pelopidas, of Plutarch is beyond question. But in Epaminondas we have besides this a splendid moral nature, and a genius for war such as had never yet been known in Greece. Both in strategy and in tactics he was unequalled. His first great victory, at Leuctra, was won by bringing a deep column to bear upon a point of the enemy's line, while the rest of it was kept in check by a demonstration rather than an attack. He solved, therefore, the great secret of winning a battle by bringing a superior force to bear upon an inferior, though the armies were equal in number. His strategy he showed over and over again by taking his army with perfect ease through the difficult passes near the Isthmus of Corinth into the Peloponnesus, though his enemies knew his intention and did all they could to block and defend these passes. Moreover, it was he that restored Messene to life, and

His genius for war.

first brought Arcadia as a political force into Greek history.

The configuration of Arcadia is so interesting, and the genius of Epaminondas in founding Megalopolis so often misunderstood, that I shall quote what I wrote about it, after carefully exploring the whole province.

Description of Arcadia.

But let us turn from this poetical and imaginary country to the real land—from Arcádia to Arcadía, as it is called by the real inhabitants. As everybody knows, this Arcadía is the alpine centre of the Morea, bristling with mountain chains, which reach their highest points in the great bar of Erymanthus, to the northwest, in the lonely peak of "Cyllene hoar" to the northeast, in the less conspicuous, but far more sacred Lykæon to the southwest, and finally, in the serrated Taygetus to the southeast. These four are the angles, as it were, of a quadrilateral enclosing Arcadia. Yet these are but the greatest among chains of great mountains, which seem to traverse the country in all directions, and are not easily distinguished, or separated into any connected system. They are nevertheless interrupted, as we found, by two fine oval plains—both stretching north and south, both surrounded with a beautiful panorama of mountains, and both, of course, the seats of the old culture, such as it was, in Arcadia. That which is southerly and westerly, and from which the rivers still flow into the Alpheus and the western sea, is guarded at its south end by Megalopolis. That which is more east, which is higher in level, and separated from the former by the bleak bar of Mænalus, is the plain of Mantinea and Tegea, now represented by the important town of Tripolitza. These two parallel plains give some plan and system to the confusion of mountains which cover the ordinary maps of Arcadia.*

Beneficial effect on Athens of the rise of Thebes.

The general effect of the collapse of the Spartan domination, of the rise of Thebes, and consequently of the partial recovery of Athens, must have been most beneficial in bringing these separate civilizations into contact, far more than had been hitherto the case, and

* "Rambles and Studies in Greece," pages 317-18 (4th edition).

so creating a broader and more universal type of Hellenic culture. States learned to pass from one alliance to another, according as the balance of power required it, and became friends of their previous enemies. Embassies went to and fro from city to city, and learned to know that their neighbours were better at home than they had imagined. The treatment of resident aliens was sure to be modified by this more constant communication, for many strangers came and went, and they frequently saw their own countrymen, who could report concerning their welfare.

Rival cities of Greece do not assimilate.

And yet it is wonderful how distinct all the cities remained. Thebes rose and fell, Sparta rose and fell in this century, and yet to its very end we can distinguish no large approximation, no attempt at fusion in their respective characteristics. Athens recovered, and learned the lesson that a democracy with a sea power is not a match for an army of yeomen, but though every Athenian philosopher makes his ideal state more like the Spartan than his own, there is neither desire nor attempt to assimilate the habits of Athens to those of Sparta.

Athens still leads in philosophy and oratory.

In philosophy, indeed, and in oratory, Athens still kept far in the van, and though her great literary men were seldom her great citizens, she gave in this century two figures to the world that will keep her glory alive forever. And each of them was only the best of a galaxy of able and brilliant rivals. But in this general sketch I can only deal with the most prominent figures; to attempt more would be so to crowd the canvas that nothing but confusion would result. The first of these figures is Plato, the second is Demosthenes.

There is no Greek figure better known to the world than that of Plato, though he conceals himself behind

his master Socrates, and gives us his views not in philosophical essays but in dramatic dialogue; and if any Greek author ever received adequate treatment in a foreign tongue, Plato has received it in the magnificent translation of Jowett, who has prefaced each dialogue with a masterly essay, gathering up the points scattered through a sometimes too expanded conversation. If the reader desires a closer and deeper acquaintance with the philosophy preached in these dialogues, he can find it in many learned books, notably in that famous book of Grote, "Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates," wherein the great historian has shown the absolute fairness and thoroughness with which he could discuss a system totally opposed to his own thinking. One thing he was the first to prove. Each of these dialogues stands independent of the rest; it is not written as part of a harmonious system; it often arrives at conclusions apparently, or even really, inconsistent with other dialogues; it represents a search after a special truth, conducted with earnestness, and not careful whether the conclusion harmonizes with the rest, or even whether there be any positive conclusion at all. There is this inconsistency in all serious human philosophy; necessity and free will, election and virtue, law and the violation of law, all appear in their turn complete explanations of life, and attempts at a theoretical compromise only lead to inconsistency and confusion. Plato preferred to carry out each discussion to its natural conclusion, taking up different lines of argument at different times, and showing how earlier teachers, Gorgias, Protagoras, Parmenides, had defended their tenets, and how far each of them had constructed a reasonable, though perhaps not an adequate theory.

Plato's "Dialogues."

His method of argument.

What concerns us here, however, is not the deeper

side, but the kind of society which meets us in his Attic scenes of life. It may fairly be said that though there are not wanting ribald scenes, or expressions of a passion foreign to Christian morals, no society is more refined, perhaps none so intellectual, as that which occupies his canvas. There are indeed some forward men, who urge brutal arguments. Thrasymachus at the opening of the "Republic" is such a character; in the "Symposium" Alcibiades comes in as a drunken reveller, telling experiences which had far better be cloaked in silence.

Reflection in Plato of Athenian refinement and intellectuality.

But all this is to show the power of the great moral teaching of Socrates, who either by irony, by acuteness, or by self-control, subdues or silences these inferior exhibitions of human passion or human selfishness. The young men of his dialogues have a maidenly charm about them, which makes them most attractive; the elder men, not including the great master, have the high qualities of truthfulness and the keen desire of knowledge. Very few women appear; that is still the weak point in Attic society. Aspasia is represented as an intellectual and interesting person, the wife of Socrates as merely a person who is in the way when the real crisis of his life arrives. There is, moreover, a large public that takes no interest in this select circle, nay, rather, is opposed to it, as aristocratic and devoting to abstract studies the time which others devote to daily work or advancement in politics.

Moral influence of Socrates on his audience.

The society in which Plato moved reminds one of that now existing in America, which is too aristocratic and too dignified to enter the turmoil and the fever of public life, and which so abhors dishonesty and selfishness in the democratic politician that it prefers to abandon its legitimate influence rather than contribute what it might

Modern parallel to the aristocratic aloofness of Plato and his friends.

to make the public character of its nation more honest and more respected. These people, like the Socratic set, are in some sense bad citizens, but they are nevertheless socially the best and most interesting of their day, and in private life at least their influence radiates to their neighbours and keeps up an ideal of honour and refinement.

Plato's public out of sympathy with his social and political ideals.

We see in Plato a gradually increasing alienation from his age; his theories were no doubt visionary and distasteful to the vulgar public; we can imagine how his theory of state selection of husbands and wives, and as a consequence temporary marriages, must have jarred upon the respectable Athenian householder.

His views upon the emancipation of women, wherein he was as modern as the most advanced nineteenth-century American, had already been ridiculed with relentless severity by Aristophanes in two of his plays, which are now hardly fit to quote. There must therefore have been a movement in this direction too in the early part of Plato's life, and the rights of women were being advocated by others besides this great authority. But unfortunately Aristophanes's satire stands alone on the other side; and we do not know who the earlier advocates of the equalization of the sexes may have been. Plato led the way for other "ideal" systems, in which the sentimentalities of marriage were cast aside as unworthy, in comparison with the duty of producing a healthier race, and of bringing up children free from the indulgences and partialities of inefficient parents.* But

His views of women and marriage.

*I would not have it thought that I stand in this matter with the vulgar public, or that I do not think the proposed reform of Plato with regard to marriage of the greatest importance. The human race will never improve as it ought till the physical conditions of the production of children are made a matter of scientific inquiry, till diseased or morally worthless persons, if shown to be unsuitable parents, are forbidden to undertake this all-important function; till the march of public opinion makes it less repugnant to have the conditions of parentage analyzed, and the secrets of domestic life scrutinized, than to allow the breeding of the most important of all animals to be carried

all these schemes foundered against the rocks of tradition, perhaps against even that of common sense. And so we have a sad picture of the "Attic Moses," as he was called in subsequent centuries, sinking into a despondent and even querulous old age.

His sense of failure.

But with all this strange modernness, Plato is a Hellene of the Hellenes. His prospect does not include any non-Hellenic races. Though he acknowledges the culture and the learning of the Egyptians, and borrows, or effects to borrow, splendid myths from other barbarians, the fusion of the Jew and Greek, of bond and free—the Hellenism of a later age—is far beyond his vision. He shares with Isocrates the old—I had well nigh said the vulgar—Greek admiration for the most retrograde and narrow of the Hellenes, the Spartans; nay, he is so exclusive and aristocratic in spirit that he will hardly condescend to consider the lower classes, and conceives, like every other Greek of that day, even his ideal society to be a select body of equals amid a crowd of unprivileged inferiors and of slaves. This it is which gives to Plato's communism a character so radically distinct from all the modern dreams known by the same name, or from the early Christian society described in the *Acts of the Apostles*. It was essentially an aristocratic communism, and was based not on the equality of men, but upon their inherent and radical disparity. It was really the republic of the select few, exercising a strict and even intolerable despotism over the masses. Here again, in spite of the modernness of the Socratic conception of the philosopher as a privileged dissentient, of the rights and the dignity of the individual and his conscience—here again Plato falls into the purest fourth-century Hellenedom, when he constructs an ideal state, or a code of laws, in which this dissentient can be allowed no place. To protect such an individual, with all his nobility, and his inestimable good effects on those around him, the actual Athens of Plato's

Plato's exclusive Hellenism.

on at mere random, while that of the rest, which are as nothing compared to it, is carefully guarded and directed. It will no doubt be necessary to run counter to much of the present sentiment on these matters, but surely if the most sensitive people nowadays will undergo the most extreme violations of delicacy in order to have children, is it not absurd that they should refuse to undergo any sacrifice of sentiment in order to have healthy or talented children? Genius now appears sporadically, and apparently from ordinary parents. If we once knew the law of its production, even approximately, what strides in advance the human race might make!

day, as Mr. Grote says, was a far safer, happier, and better abode. There democratic habits and common sense had modified and softened those theories of state interference, which no individual thinker of that age seems able to shake off.

The gloom of his later years.

All these profound contradictions were doubtless the cause of that increasing gloom and morbidness which seem to have clouded Plato's later years. He did not believe in the perfectibility of the human race. Even his ideal polity, if carried into practice, is declared by him to contain the seeds of a necessary decay. The human race was not advancing, but decaying. Dialectic and free thought led to scepticism; acquiescence in received ideas to ignorance and mental apathy. We may almost infer from the silence of contemporary history concerning his later years that, beyond his immediate disciples, he was neglected and regarded as an idle dreamer. Yet if this was so he but verified his own prophecies on the social position of the true philosopher.

Plato's poetical style suited to the form of his writings.

In his style he is as modern as in his thinking. He employed that mixture of sober prose argument and of poetical metaphor which is usual in the ornate prose of modern Europe, but foreign to the character and stricter art of the Greeks. This style, which is freely censured by Greek critics as a hybrid or bastard prose, was admirably suited to a lively conversation, where a sustained and equable tone would have been a mistake. But when Plato attempts formal rhetoric, as in the reply to Lysias in the "Phædrus," or in the "Menexenus," we find how true was the artistic feeling of the Greek schools, and how this greater genius, with its irregularities, falls below the more chastened and strictly formal essays of professional orators. He is said in his youth to have inclined to dramatic poetry, but his aversion to dramatizing passion was so ingrained, and his love of analyzing the play of intellect so intense, that we may imagine him producing very dry and unpopular tragedies. Yet his appreciation of the great poets, though his criticisms of them are always moral, and never æsthetic, was certainly thorough, and told upon his style. Above all, he shows a stronger Homeric flavour than all those who professed to worship the epics which he censured. His language everywhere bears the influence of Homer, just as some of our greatest and purest writers use, unconsciously, biblical phrases and metaphors. It is also very remarkable that he is not only the first

Influence of Homer on Plato.

Greek author who confines the name of Homer to the Iliad and Odyssey, but that the text he used was apparently that established afterwards by Aristarchus against the inferior and faulty copies used by Aristotle and later critics. The effects of the rhetoric of his rival Isocrates are also to be remarked in him, though he seems never to have adopted with any strictness that avoidance of hiatus which is a distinctive mark of Isocratic prose. Hence we see in Plato the child of his age and yet its leader, the most Attic of Athenians and yet a disaffected citizen, a profound sceptic and yet a lofty preacher, an enemy of the poets and yet a rhapsodist himself, a thinker that despaired of his own people and yet, aloft on his Pisgah of speculation, looking out with prophetic eye upon a far future of better laws, purer religion, and nobler life.*

Political dangers from the mutual jealousies of Greek cities and leagues.

The outlook in politics was indeed gloomy enough. Though culture was spreading through a larger area, though the kings of Cyprus and the dwellers in the cities of the Crimea were now cultivated Greeks, and though various disciples of Socrates had carried philosophy to various centres, where there may have been hitherto but little higher speculation; it was very plain that the mutual jealousies of Sparta, Thebes, Argos, Athens, and the nascent leagues of smaller cities presented no other prospect but one of continual and exhausting hostilities. What could be done to bring the Hellenic race together and cause them to forget their petty quarrels and jealousies in the face of some grander and nobler prospect?

Isocrates.

This was the political mission of Isocrates, whom I may here put between the two prime figures of the century at Athens, and who sought, as Epaminondas did by his strategy, so by his eloquence to bring the Greeks to their senses, and make them unite under some recognized leader to conquer the East and its enormous material resources. This writer felt clearly enough that it was only under the pressure or the excitement of a for-

* "History of Greek Literature," Mahaffy, pages 438-9.

eign war that the Greeks had even approximately united. He felt most strongly the superiority of Hellenic over barbaric civilization—a superiority which he attributed rather to culture than to race. He hoped at one time that he could induce Sparta and Athens to join together as in the days of Xerxes, and lead the combined nation. But he had no nobler object before him than to humble the barbarians, now profiting by Greek dissension, and to provide for the unceasing discontent and poverty of Hellas a great material increase of wealth. In those days conquest was regarded a perfectly legitimate way of obtaining power. It never occurred to him that the Persian king had as good a right to his kingdom as Sparta had to its supremacy in Greece. He hoped to combine his countrymen under that easiest of all bonds to forge, but the easiest also to break, that of common greed and common plunder.

The political mission of Isocrates.

This policy and various essays upon the refinement of Attic civilization were set forth in periods which for perfect rhythm and easy flow had never been equalled hitherto. The most perfect master of prose as prose had arisen, the master whom our Milton in vain attempted to rival in his ponderous and clumsy "Areopagitica." But the smooth flow of Isocrates's periods, the long roll of his sentences, were to him a greater object than his policy. It was felt that, like the rhetorical historians whom he fashioned, the way of saying things was to him far more important than the things said, to be convicted of a solecism worse than to be charged with a crime. Hence this famous man's fame rests upon his style alone, and we may dismiss him with the mere note that he attained to the utmost perfection of literary eloquence.

His perfect literary style.

But even he saw, toward the close of his life, that the

mutual jealousies of two nearly equal powers would never permit them to be joint leaders in the great enterprise of regenerating the Greeks by foreign conquest, and he saw rising in the North a new and fresh power, near enough to Hellenic life for the purpose, which might undertake the task. His open letter to Philip of Macedon abandons his former scheme, and calls upon this able and ambitious monarch to stay further oppression and conquest of the Greeks, and turn to lead them against their hereditary enemy in the East. He had gradually come to feel that the rule of one man promised better results than democracy; he had been ready to advise the tyrant of Cyprus how he might consolidate and secure his kingdom by justice and moderation.

Letter of Isocrates to Philip of Macedon.

This very exhortation proves how much the horror of monarchy was dying out of the Hellenic race; how often has that been the case, when people feel weary of discussion, of changes of policy, of uncertainty? Political discussion had become less interesting in many ways, literary and social questions obtained predominance in many minds; and both art and elegance of life seemed to have increased with poverty and the decrease of the means to satisfy them. If we turn to the indications which remain to us of art, we may say that from the domestic point of view it was developing, while from the public and religious point of view it was rather verging to decline. There was not only art on a smaller scale, but the skilled mechanic was working in clay figures to adorn the private house as the sculptor adorned the public building. Painters also had become many and celebrated, not only Zeuxis and Parrhasius, who painted for king and state, but lesser men, who painted little pictures for the pleasure of small people.*

The horror of monarchy dying out of the Hellenic race.

Development of art on a smaller scale.

* This is what Isocrates implies in his speech on "Exchange of Property," § 2.

Rotundas at end of this period.

From the end of the period before us, just at the end of Philip's reign, date at Athens and at Olympia those graceful *rotundas*, meant to celebrate victories, which show how the taste for the grandeur of the Periclean age had gone by, or else the means to satisfy it no longer existed.

Scopas and Praxiteles.

But we know that in Scopas and Praxiteles this century could show artists not to be equalled in any but the previous century. We only know of Scopas through some fragments of the great Temple of Athena Alca, near Tegea in Arcadia, which has recently been found, and through Roman copies of his sea gods. Praxiteles we long knew only from copies of his Niobe and his fauns, till the excavations at Olympia brought to light the marvellous Hermes, in the very spot where the traveller Pausanias had seen and mentioned it (150 A. D.), which may now be called the most perfect relic of sculpture in the world. What is most intensely Greek about these sculptors is their idea of personifying nature, and not only representing a mountain or a river by its tributary god, but even the emotions suggested by nature, in the expression of these figures.

The "Hermes of Olympia."

Personification in the art of Scopas and Praxiteles.

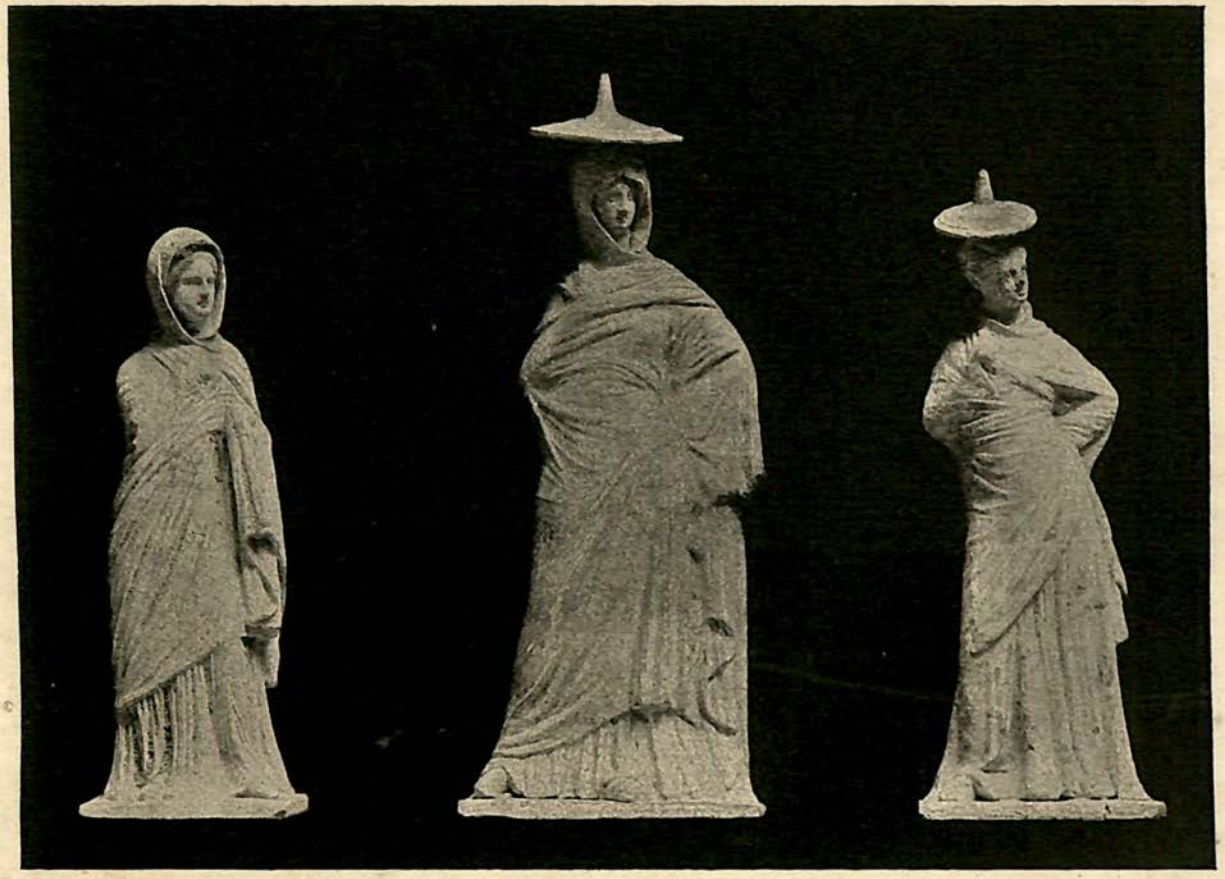
To Scopas was due the fixing of the general type for the great company of gods and nymphs which inhabited seas and rivers—matted locks of dripping hair, and a longing melancholy of expression, in which the restless moaning of the troubled sea finds its plastic utterance. To Praxiteles was due the analogous type for the forest gods—the fauns and satyrs, which, with their gnarled and knotty joints, and roughness of skin, image even more clearly the sylvan forms which the superstitious traveller was with terror in the fantastic stems of aged trees. Nay, even in his ideal Faun—a creature of perfect beauty—the listening attitude, the Pandean pipe, the indefinable suggestion of wantonness, and of mystery, speak a deeper feeling for the beauty of forest life than could be conveyed by any ordinary landscape painting.*

* "Social Life in Greece," page 483 (7th edition).

While I am speaking on the question of art at this period, it may be well to add something more concerning the graceful and delicate art of the *coroplathos*, or maker of terra-cotta figures, many of which have been found in many parts of Greece, and though the actual figures we possess are undated, and possibly of a later generation, there is no doubt that from Plato's allusions the craft existed in his day. Terra-cotta figurines.

Nothing we have yet found is more important than these figurines in showing us the difference between the ideal and the real in Greek life. We were accustomed to imagine the Hellenes of the last epoch something like the fascinating youths and maidens, the hale old men on the frieze of the Parthenon. But now we know that though full of grace and refinement, both the costume and style of men and women in ordinary life were very different. The head-dress, the muffling of the figure, the gay colours, are all so modern in their air, that we feel a strange approachment to them, they seem to us possibly of our own flesh and blood, we might expect them to open their mouths and speak to us. Their modern air.

For what purpose were all these figurines, hailing from Tanagra, Myrina, Tralles, Ialysos, Cyrene, put into the cemeteries, where we have found them? Many of them were children's toys, put with their owners by mourning parents into their bitter tomb. One series from Myrina seems to imitate the pediment of a temple, and can hardly have been a set of children's toys; some were perhaps intended as charms, or as ornaments of the house. Strange to say, though we know of the craft, we have not, so far as I know, a single ancient description of their use; there is never a name to tell us whom they represent; there is nothing for us but conjecture upon so important and widespread a feature Our ignorance of their use.



TANAGRA FIGURINES.

in the ordinary Greek house. This is a warning to us, how little we know about the trifles of their life, and how cautious we must be in drawing conclusions from the silence of our authorities upon other points.

The private life, therefore, of this epoch, so far as we know it, was more comfortable and elegant than that which preceded it, while it was on the whole less brilliant in literature and in politics. It also appears from the rapid increase of the profession of mercenary soldiers, specially noted by Isocrates, that there was an increasing class of adventurous paupers, ready to put their swords at anybody's service, and also an increasing class of comfortable citizens, devoted to business of various kinds, who would not take the field in person without the direst necessity, and were satisfied to employ not only mercenary soldiers, but a mercenary general, to fight their battles for them.

Increase of mercenary Greek soldiers.

When this state of things was once recognized, it was perfectly plain that the power of the purse was likely to make any state supreme. If the Persian king could pay Greeks to fight against other mercenary Greeks, instead of the old citizen armies which had resisted him at Thermopylæ and Platæa, how easy was his problem to solve! Had the younger Cyrus not been killed at Cunaxa, it is more than probable that he would have accomplished what his ancestors failed to do, unless indeed the combined Greeks had done what they never did before, put the Theban Epaminondas at the head of the whole nation. The jealousies of Athens and Sparta collectively, and of their prominent leaders individually, could not have tolerated such a policy for an instant.

Consequent danger from Persia.

Hence the danger from Persia was now an increasing one, and when Darius Ochus, the ablest of the later Persian kings, succeeded, and threatened invasion not

Darius Ochus.

only of Syria and Egypt, which had revolted, but of Asia Minor, we cannot but feel that patriotic Greek politicians like Demosthenes felt the prospect very gloomy and uncertain. But while they were looking eastward, the same danger arose in the North—that of an able king, with resources to pay an efficient mercenary army, and ambition to rule over Greece. It had been preached by Xenophon that the great power of Persia was at the mercy of an able invasion from the West. He did not say, what perhaps he and Isocrates both felt, that the danger of a Persian invasion was equally great to Greece. It was in fact a case where each country was weak in defence, strong in attack, and even the internal cohesion of each depended upon a vigorous foreign policy.

The necessity of a vigorous foreign policy.

So we come to the days of Philip of Macedon, and of his great opponent Demosthenes, a period which we know, politically speaking, better than most periods of ancient or mediæval history. Would that we could pierce the veil, and learn the social and artistic life with even a tithe of the political details! As is well known to those who have read my earlier books, I think Demosthenes as a politician overrated. He had indeed one great idea, to maintain the power and prestige of Athens as a leading power in Hellenedom. But the means he took to promote this end seem to me to have been neither the most moral or the most expedient. At the close of his life, at all events, his conduct was more than doubtful, and it requires all the special pleading of the most learned of advocates—Arnold Schäfer—starting, too, with a preconceived conviction of his absolute honesty, to shake the evidence which the public censure of his conduct by his countrymen affords us.

Demosthenes as a politician overrated.

This remarkable person has less of Attic grace about him than any other Athenian. He alone of them all is no aristocrat. His father was a respectable tradesman; he had no training in athletics; he was no soldier, like Xenophon, and therefore in contact with kings and generals; he was no fastidious member of the leisure classes, like Plato. This is the reason that with all his greatness no one would think of using the word *gentleman* as a distinctive epithet for him. He was trained to fight his way by dire necessity, his guardians having embezzled his property. He then lived by writing speeches for litigants, it being the fashion at Athens for the clients to speak for themselves in court, but to learn by heart the harangue written for them by a trained advocate. He was accused, and I believe justly, of having taken briefs on both sides in successive branches of the same case. There was none of the elegance of the school of Plato or of Socrates about him, nor would any one have attributed to him the political epigrams which are found in the "Anthology" under the philosopher's name.

Demosthenes a man of the people.

But, on the other hand, when he once enters into politics, we feel inspired by his red-hot earnestness, in a society which he felt to be idle and dilatory, seeking to evade responsibilities by paying mercenary troops and passing resolutions, while they devoted their real attention to the intellectual and artistic pleasures of Athenian life. The great financial reform which occupies him, when money is wanting for pressing public purposes, is to make the people surrender their Theoric Fund, which consisted in an allowance of a day's wage for every poor citizen when plays were being performed at the Dionysiac theatre. This money paid for his entrance; but he might stay at home and spend it as he chose, so that we have here an early specimen of that habit of supporting

His earnestness.

Radical financial reforms.

The Theoric Fund.

a dominant city population in idleness by money or corn drawn from the taxes of their subjects. The same thing was apparently done by the Ptolemies in Alexandria; it was done afterward on a larger scale and with more fatal effects at Rome. Any straightforward proposal to allocate this fund to war purposes would have brought on the proposer a prosecution under the "Bill of Illegality," and a heavy fine for the offence of attempting to alter the law. This was the safeguard adopted by the Athenians to prevent innovations in legislation. It was not till the utmost extremity, and when it was really far too late, that the citizens were brought to make this sacrifice.

Sources for the history of the struggle between Demosthenes and Philip of Macedon.

The details of the long struggles by which Philip of Macedon gradually sapped and overthrew the resistance of the Greek states to his encroachments, and became what we might call Emperor of the Greeks, as well as King of Macedon, may be read in any Greek history. The speeches of Demosthenes and his opponent Æschines, Plutarch's "Life of Demosthenes" and Diodorus's history (Book XVI.) make the situation perfectly clear. Philip was a man like Peter the Great of Russia, born in a partly civilized but young and vigorous nation. He came early to the centres of civilization and was even a hostage at Thebes in her great days, when he could study the new methods of Epaminondas and the success of the Theban infantry under his training. He learned to speak and write Greek perfectly, and could claim that heroic Greek descent which his ancestor Alexander I. had established in the time of the Persian wars.* His court had officially the manners and the elegance of Greek life. There were professional artists and poets whom large pay would easily attract

Early life of Philip.

* *Cf.* Herodotus V., Chap. XXII.

from the poor republics. When envoys came from Athens and Sparta, they were received with perfect courtesy. But it was freely said that when business was over, and *le roi s'amuse*, the varnish of culture disappeared; there were drunkenness and roistering, and men were often compelled to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. The Macedonian nobles were great people in their way; most of them seem to have been brought up as royal pages about the court, and so they would shake off at least the rudeness of their mountain homes, and learn Greek and manners with the royal princes. But in many respects even these suffered from the imperfect refinement of the kingdom. Polygamy seems always to have been permitted to the king; if not polygamy, that license which was so disgraceful among the European princes of the last century. By means of marrying Illyrian or Thracian princesses the kings of Macedon thought to cement new alliances with powerful or threatening neighbours. But they lost far more by the disintegration of their home-life than they gained by securing their frontiers. There were frequent family tragedies, in which these semi-barbarous princesses endeavoured to sweep away their rivals; there were relatives exiled, who revived the dangers from without; there were doubts about the succession, and all the attendant evils which this uncertainty entails.

Philip's excesses.

Polygamy of kings of Macedon.

Its evils.

It was in spite of these difficulties, which caused every accession of a new king to be a crisis in Macedonian affairs, that Philip by ability, pertinacity, diplomacy, and strategy combined, made himself in twenty years master of northern Greece. Demosthenes, who had no weapon but his tongue, and Athens, a democracy where everything was publicly discussed before it was undertaken, were no match for Philip, a man with a sword, with

Philip's talents for diplomacy and strategy.

Energy and resources of Philip.

a mine of gold in Mount Pangæus, and with the power to carry out his secret plans by a mere command. He kept, moreover, paid agents in most Greek cities, who not only thwarted and delayed any action against him, but kept him fully informed of all the proposals and possibilities discussed in the Greek assemblies. The wonder is that northern Greece resisted so long. It was not till Philip had excited through his agent Æschines two religious wars, that he made the confusion so great as to require his assistance to be invited by the distracted religious synod at Delphi.* The graphic story is as fresh, when we read it now, as ever. How the orator Æschines, attending a feast at the shrine of Delphi, looked down from his lofty position into the plain far beneath, a plain devoted to the god in a long-forgotten act of the Greeks under Solon, when those that murdered or plundered the pilgrims coming from the nearest port (Kirrha) were humbled and banished, and the cultivation of this plain forbidden. Gradually, as years and generations went on, the neighbouring Locrians, after the defeat and humiliation of the Phocians, had encroached upon the sacred plain, and covered it with crops and cattle. Nobody apparently objected; it was an accomplished sacrilege of considerable standing. Upon the unsuspecting occupiers of the sacred plain Æschines suddenly turned his mighty eloquence, in well-feigned horror at so outrageous and barefaced a sacrilege. His audience at Delphi were not

Encroachment of Locrians on the sacred plain.

*I pass over, as requiring too long a discussion, Philip's wars with the Phocian mercenary leaders who had seized the Temple of Delphi and plundered it of something like eleven millions of dollars in treasure. Thus many historic jewels and precious ornaments went to the melting-pot. The mistresses of the Phocian chiefs, who were mere leaders of mercenaries, wore necklaces that had belonged to ancient and semi-mythical queens. All the sentiments of holiness and of veneration for a noble past were shocked by these proceedings, but it was not till Philip was called in that the mercenary forces fed by the treasures of the temple were dispersed and Philip came into Greece as the advocate of religion and of the authority of the Amphictyonic Synod.

accustomed to the artistic eloquence habitual in the Attic assemblies. They simply went off their heads with excitement, and rushing down with what arms they had ready, raided the plain, committing murder and violence upon the innocent and astonished descendants of the forgotten criminals. The punishment for this outrage in the name of religion was not long delayed. The Locrians (of Amphissa) not only retaliated with success, but even made prisoners of many of the aggressors.

Raid on Locrians instigated by Æschines.

The whole story is worth telling in order to show how in these remote but truly modern days, religion was used as a political engine, and people who cared but little for the gods could excite themselves into a pious frenzy, if it was shown that the upholding of their creed coincided with the furtherance of their material interests.

"The Amphiktyons being assembled (I here give the main recital, though not the exact words, of Æschines), a friendly person came to acquaint us that the Amphissians were bringing on their accusation against Athens. My sick colleagues requested me immediately to enter the assembly and undertake her defence. I made haste to comply, and was just beginning to speak when an Amphissian—of extreme rudeness and brutality—perhaps even under the impulse of some misguiding divine impulse—interrupted me and exclaimed—'Do not hear him, men of Hellas! Do not present the name of the Athenian people to be pronounced among you at this holy season! Turn them out of the sacred ground like men under a curse.' With that he denounced us for our alliance with the Phocians, and poured out many other outrageous invectives against the city. To me (continues Æschines) all this was intolerable to hear; I cannot even now think on it with calmness—and at the moment I was provoked to anger such as I had never felt in my life before. The thought crossed me that I would retort upon the Amphissians for their impious invasion of the Kirrhæan land. That plain, lying immediately below the sacred precinct in which we were assembled, was visible throughout. 'You see, Amphiktyons (said I), that plain cul-

Recital of Æschines.

Insult to Athens by an Amphissian.

Retaliation of Æschines.

Appeal of Æschines to the Amphiktyons.

tivated by the Amphissians, with buildings erected in it for farming and pottery! You have before your eyes the harbour, consecrated by the oath of your forefathers, now occupied and fortified. You know of yourselves, without needing witnesses to tell you, that these Amphissians have levied tolls and are taking profit out of the sacred harbour!' I then caused to be read publicly the ancient oracle, the oath, and the imprecations (pronounced after the first sacred war, wherein Kirrha was destroyed). Then continuing, I said: 'Here am I, ready to defend the god and the sacred property, according to the oath of our forefathers, with hand, foot, voice, and all the powers that I possess. I stand prepared to clear my own city of her obligations to the gods; do you take counsel forthwith for yourselves. You are here about to offer sacrifice and pray to the gods for good things, publicly and individually. Look well then—where will you find voice, or soul, or eyes, or courage, to pronounce such supplications, if you permit these accursed Amphissians to remain unpunished, when they have come under the imprecations of the recorded oath? Recollect

He reminds them of the oath of their forefathers.

that the oath distinctly proclaims the sufferings awaiting all impious transgressors, and even menaces those who tolerate their proceedings, by declaring—They who do not stand forward to vindicate Apollo, Artemis, Latona, and Athene Pronæa, may not sacrifice undefiled or with favourable acceptance."

Such is the graphic and impressive description given by Æschines himself some years afterwards to the Athenian assembly, of his own address to the Amphiktyonic meeting in spring 339 B. C., on the lofty site of the Delphian Pylæa, with Kirrha and its plain spread out before his eyes, and with the ancient oath and all its fearful imprecations recorded on the brass plate hard by, readable by every one. His speech, received with loud shouts, roused violent passion in the bosoms of the Amphiktyons, as well as of the hearers assembled round. The audience at Delphi was not like that of Athens. Athenian citizens were accustomed to excellent oratory, and to

Excitement of the Amphiktyons.

the task of balancing opposite arguments: though susceptible of high-wrought intellectual excitement—admiration or repugnance as the case might be—they discharged it all in the final vote, and then went home to their private affairs. But to the comparatively rude men at Delphi, the speech of a first-rate Athenian orator was a rarity. When Æschines, with great

rhetorical force, unexpectedly revived in their imaginations the ancient and terrific history of the curse of Kirrha—assisted by all the force of visible and local association—they were worked up to madness; while in such minds as theirs, the emotion raised would not pass off by simple voting, but required to be discharged by instant action.*

Mass of the people still revere the gods.

All this is most interesting, as showing us that in spite of philosophers and historians, in spite of rational inquiry and moral protests, the gods of the Greek pantheon were still gods to the mass of the people, and it was still possible to discredit and ruin an adversary by charging him with impiety. This sort of faith seems to remain in the people down to the latest and most sceptical days, when most of the serious thinkers and most of the educated classes do not hesitate to avow their scepticism. But have we not had similar phenomena many times since, during the Italian Renaissance, during the French Revolution, and even after a polite fashion in our own day?† It should be remembered in palliation of the Greeks that they had no revelation, no faith purified of superstition, no high moral standard preached by any established clergy in their land. Their highest moral teachers were laymen, and, if I may so say, amateurs in theology.

Philip advances into Greece.

This sudden flame excited by Æschines, as sudden as the outbreak of the Armenian disturbances in 1895, clouded the whole political horizon, brought Philip through the passes (he fortified Elatea in the critical place), and forced at the last moment the Thebans and Athenians to combine in a vain attempt to resist him. The battle of Chæronea (338 B. C.) settled the question

Greek defeat at Chæronea.

* Grote, "History of Greece," Chap. XC.

† Thus at a recent election for the British Parliament held in Dublin University the opponents of the famous historian, Mr. Lecky, who were lawyers, and desired to return one of their own body, raised a religious cry against him, with no more honesty than the tirade of Æschines. This happened in the year of our Lord 1895.

of the supremacy in Greece. Two memorable monuments remain of this crisis, one the lion over the fallen in that battle, the other the "funeral oration" of Greek liberty—the famous speech "On the Crown" delivered some years later by Demosthenes. As regards the lion I cannot tell the impression it made upon me better than by repeating my words written long ago.

The lion of Chæronea.

As we saw it, on a splendid afternoon in June, it lay in perfect repose and oblivion, the fragments large enough to tell the contour and the style; in the mouth of the upturned head, wild bees were busy at their work, and the honeycomb was there between its teeth. The Hebrew story came fresh upon us, and we longed for the strength which tore the lion of old, to gather the limbs and heal the rents of his marble fellow. The lion of Samson was a riddle to the Philistines which they could not solve; and so I suppose this lion of Chæronea was a riddle, too—a deeper riddle to better men—why the patriot should fall before the despot, and the culture of Greece before the Cæsarism of Macedonia. Even within Greece there is no want of remarkable parallels. This, the last effulgence of the setting sun of Greek liberty, was commemorated by a lion and a mound, as the opening struggle of Marathon was also marked by a lion and a mound. At Marathon the mound is there and the lion gone—at Chæronea the lion is there and the mound gone. But doubtless the earlier lion was far inferior in expression and in beauty, and was a small object on so large a tomb. Later men made the sepulchre itself of less importance, and the poetic element more prominent; and perhaps this very fact tells the secret of their failure, and why the refined sculptor of the lion was no equal in politics and war to the rude carver of the relief of the Marathonian warrior.

The lion of Marathon.

These and such like thoughts throng the mind of him who sits beside the solitary tomb; and it may be said in favour of its remoteness and difficulty of access, that in solitude there is at least peace and leisure, and the scattered objects of interest are scanned with affection and with care.

Demosthenes's "On the Crown."

The other monument is the great speech, which was out of date when it was delivered, for the particular

question was not only settled, but the gigantic figure of Alexander loomed upon the world; it is ever fresh to the present day, as the proudest and most perfect protest of the Hellenic idea of liberty against the imperialism of Macedonia.

Subtleties of the style of Demosthenes.

Here again we have a jewel in Greek literature which no translation can even faintly reproduce. For apart from the subtle woof of the oration, which blends cold argument with impassioned appeal, personal invective with large policy, urgent reasons with specious fallacies which we can still analyze, the rhythm and balance of the composition, the almost poetical rise and fall of the periods, the careful attention to sound as well as to sense, are such that only in recent days are its secrets being unlocked, and we are beginning to understand what was meant when men said that such a speech smelt of the midnight lamp. The subtleties of this oration are like the delicate curves in all the lines of the Parthenon, which looked a building easy enough to copy with modern appliances, whereas we now know that such a task would be perfectly vain.

Calm of peroration.

One feature, however, is especially worth mentioning here, as it recurs in most of Demosthenes's speeches, and that is the quiet and almost tame ending. The great splendour of the speech is not reserved for peroration, but shines all over its framework. As in tragedy, so in eloquence, it seems rather in accordance with Greek taste to allow the hearer's feelings to subside into calm before the orator concluded.*

These remarks upon the eloquence of Demosthenes suggest to me that a word may be said concerning the society of Athens which is addressed in the speeches not

* In modern art I can point to an example in some of Gounod's finest songs, which after a passionate outburst have a tame and almost poor conclusion.

only of this great master, but of his predecessors as far back as Lysias at the opening of the century, and of his successors or younger contemporaries, with whom he was frequently in conflict.

Studies of character in the speeches of Lysias.

It does not concern us to know whether the arguments of Lysias and his school were accurate. In one thing they must have approached life as nearly as the genteel comedy did; they composed their court speeches in *character*, and put very different arguments in a very different style according as their clients varied in rank and circumstances. We have the bold and reckless young aristocrat, full of horse-play and insolence, the timid householder appealing for mercy by bringing up his wife and little children to excite commiseration, nay even in one speech of Lysias "Concerning the Pauper,"* a picture of what is commonly called an "original," a man patronized by the rich for his pleasant manners and good sayings, and who defends himself against the charge of being no pauper, because his friends give him a horse to ride, with no little humour.

The genius of Demosthenes does not lie in this direction. The speeches written for his private clients do not show this dramatic turn. Even in the long process against his guardians, we do not feel any more difference in their varieties of dishonesty than we do in the secondary characters in "Pickwick," which are, with one or two exceptions, lay figures.

Evidence from Demosthenes for the moral standard of public life.

It will be said by his extreme admirers that he was too serious for such matters, that he fixed his whole attention on the case, without desiring to do more than press home the most convincing arguments. That may be true, but to give us a picture of society he is therefore

* He was supported as such by a state allowance. His accuser thought it no proper case for such charity because the man was really well off.

not so useful as his inferior but more human rivals. His honesty is only worth considering as giving us a clue to the moral standard of public life at Athens in those days. That such a standard could be absolutely very high we know from the life and acts of Phocion, who seems always to have despised Demosthenes not only as a man of too many words, but (I fancy) as a man of doubtful honesty.

Phocion's attitude to Demosthenes.

But I desire to insist upon this, that we must rather blame the low average of political honesty at Athens than degrade the great orator to the position to which modern morals would condemn him. In fact, the ordinary rules of political life at Athens tolerated abuses which may perhaps still exist in America, but which are happily almost extinct in England. I allude above all to the abuse of allowing indirect profits to be made by politics.

Low average of political honesty.

Our evidence on this point and in the case of Demosthenes is too precise to be refuted, and shows us that he must have done many acts in his life which left him open to charges of dishonesty which he could only rebut by a general appeal to his character, but which he could never directly refute. All his accusers agree in speaking of his great wealth in mature life. It is the common theory of the moderns that he made his fortune by speech-writing. But as he abandoned this profession early, and as we never hear of its being a very lucrative one, such an explanation is quite inadequate. How do his opponents account for it? Hypereides is peculiarly precise, and gives us exactly the information which is interesting for our present purpose. "As I have often before said in public, judges, you allow many profits without demur to generals and politicians—not by the permission of the laws, but from your easy temper and good nature—making this one condition, that what they make must be for your sake, and not against your interests. And I suppose that Demosthenes and Demades, from the mere decrees passed in the city, and their relations with aliens, have each received more than sixty talents, apart from gifts from the Persian king." We have the same thing asserted in the speech for Euxenippus quite generally; as to Demosthenes, we have in the accusation of Deinarchus the

Profits of political life.

same facts worked out in detail. We are given a list of decrees which he was supposed to have carried not without gratuities for doing so, and then we are informed that he had an immense property of ready money—as much as a hundred and fifty talents—the evidence of the large profits of his politics.

These profits made in interest of the democracy.

I can see no reason to doubt, and I am convinced no contemporary doubted, the truth of these statements as to his wealth, and his manner of acquiring it. But I repeat that it was looked upon as fair and honourable in the society of that day, provided it was obtained from friends, and not from enemies of the democracy, and provided it was spent liberally on public objects. In fact, the ordinary formula of accusation all through these orations is not that the accused took bribes and benevolences, but that he took them "against your interests," and this was the only criminal point. Accordingly in Demosthenes's replies, so far as we can judge from the "Oration on the Crown," he never denied his wealth; he never denied that he had received large monies on the score of politics, but he insists that he never acted or spoke except in the interests of the democracy.*

Monetary problems in Demosthenes's speeches.

The business side of these speeches is a special study which requires intricate research, and the monetary questions which sometimes arise in this and later days are as complicated and incomprehensible as the bimetallic controversy in our own time. We know from a dialogue attributed to one of the companions or followers of Socrates (Æschines, not the orator) that the great traders of the eastern Levant, the Phœnicians, had long since discovered the use of token money. They had no doubt also bills and checks, but the device in question was to seal up small bags professing to have within them a certain sum, which was stamped upon the outside with the seal of the state. Though it was notorious that the coin was not there, such a bag, so long as it carried the seal guaranteeing its value in exchange, passed as actual money.

Token money.

* "Social Life in Greece," Mahaffy, pages 425-7 (7th edition).

The most doubtful point about their business arrangements seems to be the persistent high rate of interest—twelve per cent was thought very low, and could be had on the safest investments, whereas we find that as security increases, and men come to understand international duties, the interest on money that is safe sinks lower and lower, so that now our state securities in England are even below three per cent. This arises, I suppose, from two causes, either or both of which might produce this result. First, the insecurity of republics as such and the frequency of wars made investments for any long period unsafe, and it is only investments which are practically permanent, which cause no trouble or care to the investor, that are now placed at very low interest. Secondly, the want of accumulated capital makes it more difficult to obtain idle money for immediate commercial use, and raises the price which men are willing to pay for that use. In every disturbed place, or on the frontiers of civilization, money is even now dear enough, and there are plenty of societies whose men would willingly borrow if they could at twelve per cent, because they can obtain quick returns with very large profits. Such considerations are obvious. To enter more deeply into money questions would require a special knowledge which I do not possess.

High rate of interest.

Reasons for low rate of interest in our day.

While speaking of the great orators, who made style their first object, we have naturally drifted away from the other great contemporary development in Greek writing. I mean the philosophical, which despised all the adjuncts of grace, of pathos, of humour, with which Plato had set forth his system, and set store upon nothing but logical acuteness and scientific accuracy. This is the reason why we often feel that Aristotle, in

Philosophical prose after Plato.

Wide range of Aristotle's studies.

many senses the greatest of the Greeks, is not a Greek at all. He was an encyclopædist; his studies embraced all departments of human knowledge. Like Solomon, he discoursed on plants, "from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth on the wall"; upon animals, upon the heavenly bodies and their divine author, on the mind of man and its faculties, intellectual and moral, in fact, on all things human and divine.

Aristotle's definition of rhetoric.

He even turns, not only to rhetoric, which he defines as the art of persuasion, but to poetry, especially the art of representing fictitious characters upon the stage, and subjects what we should call a mere form of amusement to the most searching analysis and criticism. But here he is indeed a Greek, and bases his researches upon the theory that intellectual and refined leisure is the chief end of man. This he holds to be even the happiness of the gods, or of the Deity, and whatever beings there are in a higher state than men. They are employed in the contemplation of the immense variety and beauty of the universe, and this contemplation is no labour, but the enjoyment of perfect knowledge and perfect leisure. This, too, should be the happiness of the cultivated man here, whose leisure hours should not be spent in regarding vulgar cares, or be wasted upon vulgar sympathies, but engaged in contemplating ideal human actions—not always ideally good, but ideal in their greatness, their dignity, their importance, as illustrations of the laws which govern the world. Thus he raises the tragedy of the great masters to a subject fit for divine philosophy, and not unworthy of the highest scientific treatment. We need not here turn aside to his purely physical labours—labours which have affected mediæval life far more than they affected his own time and age, labours in which he substituted for the poetry of Plato's theories

His theory of intellectual pleasure as the end of life.

the prose of the painstaking observation of myriad facts. Here we should find his most universal and non-Hellenic side. But in his "Ethics" and his "Politics" he is still a Hellene of the Hellenes, overrating the power of intellect as compared with moral instincts, above all overrating the politics of the little Greek democratic state in comparison with the imperial system inaugurated by his great pupil Alexander.* And yet he never took any practical part in the turbulent affairs of the states in which he lived.

Aristotle's "Ethics" and "Politics."

He sojourned in Macedonia, in Asia Minor; he ultimately kept a school at Athens; but even there he was a "Peripatetic," not settled as it were, or rooted to any spot, not bound, as every other Hellene was, to one narrow fatherland. Thus he comes to have but little place in this book, for I cannot but instinctively regard him as a great outsider, combining many narrownesses indeed of his age and race with a certain cosmopolitanism which was no small agent in breaking down the peculiar virtues as well as the weaknesses of Hellenedom, and changing it into the broader, shallower, more commonplace Hellenism, which we shall consider in a subsequent chapter. As in his personal appearance, so in his writings, there was an almost total absence of beauty, and the recovery of his lost work on the constitution of Athens has not altered that judgment.

Aristotle a true "Peripatetic."

Absence of beauty in his work places him outside of Greek culture.

What place can a man devoid of this feature have in a study of Greek culture? None, I think, but that of a strange and notable exception, given us, as it were, to show that even in scientific severity, in cold reasoning, in complete absence of any relaxation of thought and of life, the Greeks were our masters, and equalled the best

* I must refer the reader for details to the chapter on Aristotle in my "History of Greek Classical Literature."

modern men here, as they surpassed them in manifestations of the beautiful. For there never was any single man who had a greater effect in promoting the knowledge of his own and of succeeding generations. It may even be said in proof of his greatness that he also retarded more than any other man ever did the course of scientific discovery. For he bound the learned men of the Middle Ages by the superstitious veneration for his words, which they accepted as almost inspired. In the thirteenth century he was all but canonized as a saint by the Roman Catholic Church. And so modern thinkers found it their hardest task to break through the bonds of Aristotle, whom early thinkers had failed to follow in his marvellous investigations. Were there ever stranger or more inconsistent evidences of human greatness!

Aristotle's influence on scientific discovery.

Reverence for Aristotle in the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOURTH CENTURY B. C. (*Continued*).

HAVING now surveyed rapidly the most remarkable developments of the fourth century B. C. down to the accession of Alexander, it is worth while to pause at the threshold of a new epoch and reflect upon the wonderful age which we have just passed through. It may fairly be said that the century 435–335 B. C. was the most important that ever yet has occurred for the cultivation of the human race. Not in quantity or extent of culture—far from it—but in quality. It was during that century that there was attained in many of the highest departments of human intellect a standard, which has not only never been exceeded, but to which we have ever since been striving as an ideal, and striving in vain. When we speak of classical works, as a standard for our literature, we refer to the works which were produced within a hundred, or at least a hundred and fifty years, ending with the fall of the liberties of Greece. We may use the word in a second-hand sense, as applying to Roman models. But these were all depending directly upon the Greek originals, which were the only true classics the world has yet produced. There have been other great developments of art and literature called Romantic, called Mediæval, called Byzantine, or what you like, and very splendid some of them have been. But once and again the world has turned from them with the enthusiasm of a new discovery to the great original classics, which exalt the

Culture of the fourth century unrivalled.

Greek masterpieces the only true classics.

mind and give repose to the feelings by the strict chastity of their forms and the ideal perfection of their designs.

Greek sculpture result of art, not science.

This unique phenomenon in history is most easily seen, of course, in those products where pure form is the primary object. There is not the smallest question about the products of Greek sculpture from Phidias, who walked with Pericles, to Lysippus, who added glory to Alexander the Great. We have but scanty remains of it, or else Roman copies, which are but faithful translations of the originals with the anxiety of the copyist marring the freedom of the conception. But this is enough, quite enough, to tell us that no mediæval or modern sculptor has ever approached their excellence in treating ideal humanity. They did not dissect the human body; they had no lessons in anatomy, such as the modern sculptor may attend, to show him the accurate working of joints, the play of muscle, the secrets of nature in raising a machine into an organism. But the daily experience of youths in the palestræ,* the study of the nude in the other sex, in a society and a climate where the nude was not shocking, and therefore not exceptional, gave them knowledge enough to set the criticism of the most careful modern anatomist at defiance, and prove to him that it is not science, but art, which solves problems, which understands mysteries, so far as its province is concerned.

Greek ignorance of anatomy.

Greek genius for composition in sculpture.

But the isolated figure only affords us a small idea of this classical sculpture. When we consider the composition of a frieze, the bringing into harmony the variety of many figures, the various attitudes, such as we have them in the Parthenon frieze, or in the Attic tomb-reliefs, then their sense of beauty, of proportion, of free symmetry, strikes us with even greater wonder. We

SCULPTURE OF THE PERIOD OF PHIDIAS.

shall revert in due time to an instance of this composition (on the great sarcophagus of Sidon) as well as to the perfection of a single figure (the Venus of Melos), which prove that these secrets were not lost as suddenly as they were found, and that even late into the Hellenistic decadence men were able to appreciate and even to reproduce the beauties of truly classical sculpture. The case is nearly as clear in architecture, though here many other nations, ancient and modern, have supplied us with other splendid models, which we can copy, but cannot rival by any new creation of style.

Poverty of art instincts of the present age illustrated by architecture.

It is the most singular proof of the poverty of the art instincts of our century that in an age where not only the science of mechanical construction, but the control of new materials, has attained a pitch unheard of before, all this new power has not taught us to apply it in a new way, or in a style either original or beautiful. Thus the conquest of iron as a building material in our century ought to have produced a distinctive style, as much as the conquest of Pentelic marble did in the days of Ictinus and Mnesicles, the great builders on the Athenian Acropolis. But it is not so. Our iron buildings imitate older designs, they copy Renaissance ornaments, compound and contort old ideas into something pretending to be new, but it is only a pretence. "For the old is better." If any city in the world could now secure for one of its public buildings an exact replica of the Parthenon, it would at once be recognized as the most peerless and perfect thing which that city could procure. We know also that the cost of it now would be almost fabulous. And though the temples in Egypt are splendid, they have become antiquated to modern taste. No one would now seek to reproduce them on a large scale, any more than we should re-

The Parthenon a model for all periods.

produce Chinese pagodas. But the Parthenon would be no more antiquated than the English of the Bible is antiquated, for we have had our artistic taste fed on it from our infancy, nationally and individually. Therefore the Romans tried to adopt it, and the men of the Renaissance, and since that time we also, though not one of us even understood the plan till Mr. Penrose explained it to us in his "Athenian Architecture."

Ionic style in architecture.

Nor were these wonderful people confined to one strict style. We have what is called the Ionic, suited to smaller and more decorated buildings, still showing blue and gold on the ceilings, still showing delicate tracing round door-frames. And just at the close of the epoch we have the still richer Corinthian, which so took the fancy of the Romans, and indeed of the Hellenistic age which the Romans copied, that we might fairly call it the Græco-Roman order, with which the emperor Hadrian adorned not only Greece but the whole Roman world, from Palmyra to Spain.

Corinthian.

Their painting and their music are gone, and it may be that these men, so perfect in some forms of art, were not perfect in all, and that this loss had tended to raise them in our estimation. But if musical faculty consists in the rhythm of language, in delicately constructed periods, in expressive metres, then we must hold that the Greeks of the fourth century B. C. had the most exquisite feeling for the beauty and symmetry of sound. Even in our miserable modern pigeon-Greek, which represents no real pronunciation, either ancient or modern, the lyrics of Sophocles or Aristophanes are unmistakably lovely poetry; the dialogues in interchanged lyrics and iambics in Euripides dramatic beyond all modern parallel.

Greek feeling for the beauty of sound.

But form is after all but the lesser side of literary art.

Lofty ideas combined with perfection of form.

What were the ideas which these people clothed in such exquisite dress? Were they ideas commonplace, unworthy, even provincial, special, not fit for transference into modern life? Far from it. The first and greatest Athenian poet who comes before the golden age of literature, Æschylus, has indeed such vast conceptions that his utterance at times fails him, and though a hundred imitators have essayed to give us his "Agamemnon," it still remains half revealed to us in its mysterious gloom. But when we come to Sophocles, though the subject of his greatest tragedy is hardly more fit for modern taste than Shelley's "Cenci," yet in every line of it there is refinement, there are beauty and fitness of expression, there is such an avoidance of dread details as shows the perfect artist, and with all the richness of this work, with all the lyric splendour of the odes, the pathetic dignity of the dialogue, there is one feature common to the architecture, the poetry, the sculpture, the eloquence—its chastity in style.

Severe purity of Greek style.

I know not by what other word I can designate this essentially classical feature, which means the absence of all that is tawdry, the absence even of all that we could call florid, a certain severity and reticence which are as marked in the prose of Thucydides as they are in the marble of Phidias. The art of Euripides was censured

Greek criticism of the style of Euripides.

by the older school of this century as deficient in this quality: he sought, they said, to excite pathos too directly and violently, instead of purifying such emotions of the soul by exercising them on high and pure ideas, far from the vulgarities of life. But if this be so, he surely sought to gain in breadth what he may have lost in height; he desired to bring the more common phases of life into the tragic dignity; he sought, too, to infuse into his dialogue touches of that deeper philoso-

phy which had hitherto been a stranger to the stage. For Euripides was the friend of Anaxagoras, whose rationalism attracted Pericles and the higher spirits, but excited the persecutions of the crowd. Such meat was too strong for babes in metaphysics; it was through the pores of their intellectual skin that Euripides administered the medicine that they would not or could not drink. He was the spiritual friend also of Socrates, whose great home mission must have affected him with deep sympathy, though we do not hear of any close intercourse between the recluse of the study and the missionary who spent his life in the streets.

Philosophy of Euripides.

These were the men who led the way in the second half of our period to the divine philosophy of Plato, which combines with the purest and loftiest thinking that perfection of form not since equalled, and places that great spirit not only among the deepest thinkers, but the most perfect artists of all time. The old fashion of presenting philosophical systems in poetic form, which had been that of Parmenides, of Empedocles, of Democritus—how splendid such poetry can be, we know from the reproduction by Lucretius—now gave way forever to the treatment in prose; but, as if to show us how this classical period was destined to outstrip in everything later and lesser epochs, all the subsequent essays in prose philosophy never attained to Plato's perfection. There have since been great philosophers; there have since been great prose writers; but never has the combination been so admirable; not even in the dialogues of our greatest English masters, of whom Bishop Berkeley alone may be called a worthy follower and pupil of Plato, but very far indeed from a rival.

Plato's mastery of style.

His style never equalled by later writers.

Is it not the most wonderful evidence of the absolute

superiority of this matchless century, that in such a subject, where subsequent thinking, subsequent discoveries, subsequent advances in science have corrected so much of what Plato thought, and added so much to what Plato said, not a single master has ever given us a life-work to compare in its artistic perfection with this classical edifice of philosophy? So it is with the forensic eloquence, so it seems to be wherever the Greeks of that day chose to show us a model of artistic work.

Greek perfection in all their artistic work.

We must not weary of repeating these things in a concerted and self-conscious age, among people who imagine that the great conquests over matter in our century imply great conquests in the domain of mind. But science is not art; science is not human life; science is not perhaps even the best highroad to happiness, though it may be to material comfort.

Appreciation of the beautiful does not imply pursuit of the good.

On the other hand, I am not sure that the perfect appreciation of the beautiful has as yet, in any society, implied what it ought to imply, the keenest pursuit of the good, and I at least have maintained for many years the position that the average Greeks of this time were not wonders of beauty, delicacy, and refinement in their every-day life. To me it is chimerical to assert that the average young Spartan or Athenian was like the ideal figure of Phidias and Praxiteles; these great men knew how to idealize better than our sculptors do, which means that from ordinary men and women they were able to draw types of what was better and more splendid, that like Virgil copying from Aratus,* the translation while faithful was far purer and more poetical than the original. Had our sculptors been transferred to those studios, they would probably not have found models as perfect as any sculptor might now find if he

Idealism in Greek sculpture should not mislead us.

* In his "Georgics," concerning the signs of weather.

went to study the play of limb and muscle among the naked and free islanders of Fiji or Samoa. The average thinker on philosophical subjects was probably far inferior to the average that might now be met in any cultivated society, and yet Plato, with few and imperfect models, passed beyond mere imitation to the creation of something far beyond their dictation.

Greek genius idealized its material.

This is the feature which so many learned students of Greek life seem to me to have misunderstood ; it is the long distance between the artist who has genius and the ordinary facts which inspire his work. I am not sure that it is wise to pry into the back scenes of any great play. The modern fashion, which we find among the later Greeks, of adorning the person of the artist and searching greedily into his private life is a vulgar and mischievous taste, quite foreign to what is really noble in art. For the real genius of the worker is in his spirit, not in his "muddy nature of decay," it comes to us in his work, though his personality is sometimes mean, sometimes even odious. The student of history and of art has no concern with these things, if he can but take from each man or each age the purest and best that that man or age has produced. It is therefore to be remembered that no foibles or failings which we find in the men of Plato's or of Demosthenes's age can mar the classical perfection of what they have produced. But some knowledge of these foibles may even enhance our appreciation of their art, for it may show us how far they rose out of their every-day surroundings, and how it may yet be possible for another age to manifest another such burst of immortal genius, without the total reformation of society, without the fulfilment of the dream of the socialist, that the whole mass of men should be raised to so exceptional a level.

The genius of the Greeks glorified commonplace surroundings.

Average of Greek life not to be estimated by the genius of a few.

The world moments of great art are like those brilliant constellations which occur at long intervals in the starry heavens. The whole ground as we see it, though made up of innumerable lights, is dark and only studded with some isolated luminaries. Here and there, there is a brilliant group, but these do not make any change in the background, unless it is that they obscure the lesser lights which are beside them. The floor of heaven shows nothing but consistent gloom. So it is with the background of human history. Up to the present day it is only the few that have ever made the glory of a society: the masses, even the classes, have contributed in some cases encouragement, in many more hindrances and obstacles to the rise of genius. Average human nature has in all ages been a poor and vulgar thing, and I do not think that even the brilliant Athens of Pericles was more than a partial exception to this sad rule.

The darker side of the picture.

These are the considerations with which I desire to introduce a few remarks on the lesser and lower side of Greek life, even at Athens, at this memorable time. It is not for the sake of carping at the shady side of splendour, or of bringing down the achievements of these people to the level of our own. Far from it. But when rightly understood it will complete our picture by showing us that we are dealing with no race of superior beings "delicately marching through the most pellucid air," but with men of like passions with ourselves, and in some respects worse than we have learned to be, though in others vastly our superiors. History shows no steady and systematic advance from barbarism to semi-barbarism, from semi-barbarism to lower, then to higher civilization, but a chronicle of brilliant beginnings that were but dreams, of splendid hopes that turned to disappointment, of eras which heralded a great future

and turned to decay. Even as individual genius commonly springs from obscure parents, and produces obscure children, so epochs grow suddenly splendid and yet produce no offspring worthy of their greatness.

Cruelty of Greeks to slaves and prisoners.

The first thing that meets a modern reader when he studies the history of the Golden Age of Greece is the constant occurrence of cruelty. Not only are slaves constantly put to the torture when required to give evidence, as if they were unable otherwise to speak the truth, but we find in war that it is quite usual, even for the Athenians who boast of their humanity, to put prisoners to death in cold blood. I have indeed by an emendation which I consider certain removed from the text of Thucydides what seemed the most horrible instance: After the public assembly at Athens had actually decreed that the whole adult male population of Mytilene, subdued after a revolt, should be put to death, and this cruel vote which affected five thousand lives had been rescinded, and the execution of the decree stopped at the last moment, the historian says quietly: "The ringleaders, however, the Athenians put to death, and they were more than a thousand." Happily I was able to show that the early signs for 1, 4, and 30 were constantly confused in early cursive writing, and that in the present case Λ, which is 30, must have been mistaken for Δ, and then made into Χ, which is the sign for 1,000.

Emendation of Thucydides.

Cold-blooded massacre of Athenians by Spartans.

But there can be little doubt about atrocities fully as great at the close of what we may call the "Thirty Years' War," when Lysander and the Lacedæmonians put to death in cold blood over three thousand Athenian prisoners on the shore of the Hellespont. During the course of that war the Platæan prisoners of war had been executed one by one with similar atrocity. I need

not delay upon this painful subject; the facts in these latter cases seem to be indisputable.

Greed and jealousy of the Greeks.

Not less disagreeable though less shocking is the ingrained grasping and jealousy of the Greek nature, shown in their politics, both home and foreign, all through the epoch. It was indeed the fashion still to appeal to the gods and to the cause of justice, but these appeals were never regarded, and seem quite idle except to excite odium against the aggressor. For the foundations of honour and mercy are laid so deep in all human nature that no course of crime seems able to eradicate them; there were, moreover, in Greece always great individuals who still kept alive among men the high standard which the old poets and moralists had preached. But greed and jealousy seem always to be there, as they are in some of the modern nations of Europe.

Candour of Socrates would not have been tolerated in politics.

When Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates that noble defence of his mission called the "Apologia," he replies to the question why so constant a teacher and preacher had not taken to politics and given advice to the Athenians in public affairs, by saying that had he done so, he would have been exiled or put to death long ago, because the assembly would not tolerate any adviser who resisted their passions and censured their injustice.

Their rapacity blinds Greeks to questions of right and wrong.

If this be true of the Athenian assembly, how much more must it have been so with inferior states? The cold-blooded selfishness of Spartan policy is even more repulsive than the passionate outrages of the Athenian. Even still piracy was regarded rather as adventurous than criminal, and the Attic navy kept the seas clear not because the "vintage of the sea" was regarded as criminal and cruel, but because it interfered with com-

mercial enterprise. No Greek state would have felt the smallest qualms of conscience at permitting pirates to make a descent upon a rival or unfriendly city's coasts. In the same way it was not regarded that any non-Hellenic state, especially the realm of the Persian king, had any rights whatever against Greek aggression and Greek rapacity. The calm and polished Isocrates thinks it perfectly legitimate to unite all Greece in an attack upon Persia, regardless of all treaties, "in order that poor Greeks may be enriched, and that the barbarians may think less of themselves." All this was contemporaneous with the pure morals of Socrates and the lofty metaphysic of Plato.

Indifference of Hellenes to the rights of non-Hellenes.

But if the artists, as I have explained, had created ideals far above their models in ordinary life, so the philosophers had soared far beyond the clouds and mists of ordinary morals. The whole picture then is unpleasant, but not unnatural. In the present day we have known artists of consummate skill, and with a very refined sense of beauty, yet anything but pure or lofty in their lives. The pursuit of the beautiful is not yet identical with the pursuit of the good, and in some senses only with the pursuit of the true.

Some of the causes of these grave defects are not far to seek. I will not pretend to say that they are adequate to explain all. For the differences of national character are so deep set, and so obscure, that it were idle to attempt any complete explanation. Among the first we may place the attitude of women, who were in most Greek states brought up, as Xenophon says, in silence and in fear, at Sparta, on the contrary, in license and insubordination, so that although to philosophers they seemed a model for the arrangements of their ideal states, to ordinary Greeks their license seemed rather a

Some causes of the Greek lack of moral sense.

Secluded life and inferior position of women.

Spartan eccentricity than a thing to be copied or desired. This absence of the moral influence of women, who lived and thought apart, and whose private life was suspected of many disorders which we cannot establish or gainsay, had, I believe, a great effect in making Greek life hard and unlovely. The angel of the house, who allays so much strife, who sets the example of so much unselfishness, who protects the feeble and the sick, was wanting there. The gentleness of modern life is not the gentleness of the Greeks. No man was ever sounder in morals than Socrates, yet there is a strange want of kindness about him. In his great dying scene his wife and children are sent away as an obstacle to noble talk; as a mere annoyance, with their lamentation and their tears! Could anything be more significant of the contrast of which I speak?

Lack of kindliness.

Those who had most effect upon society were women like Sappho or Aspasia, who combined with a high intellect and a thorough education a life unrestrained by ordinary moral considerations. We might put it in a paradox and say that they were in society and influenced society, because they were out of society. If the habit of exposing infants was indeed common, and the evidence on this point is usually thought conclusive, can we conceive anything more brutalizing and searing to the natural instinct of affection of any young mother than to have her new-born infant taken from her, and thrown to the ravens and the wolves? And yet it is very hard to evade the statements not only that such conduct was strictly legal, but that it frequently occurred. I personally still feel sceptical, for I know not in actual history of any case where such an infant was picked up, or where exposure of this kind is said to have been perpetrated by a person with a name. But in Greek fiction, from the

Exposure of infants.

early legends down to the comedies of Menander, it is the constant background of a story. This at least shows that it was tolerated by Greek sentiment, and is another proof of the hardness of their hearts.

It is quite possible that the habit of keeping slaves may have had much to do with this inhumanity in the life of ancient nations. Men are not regardless of the rights of human beings in one relation without the penalty of falling into general callousness. The inflicting of pain on others, unless it be opposed by a sentiment of horror, is not likely to be checked by rational considerations or by legislation. I suppose that to their domestic animals these people were also cruel. The urgent speed at which the Parthenon and the Propylæa were built probably entailed horrible suffering on countless slaves and countless beasts of burden. We wonder at the purity and perfection of the design; we forget the tears and the blood shed in the labour of the building. We know very well that in many cases the slave was well treated, that he became the confidant, even the friend of his master. Euripides turns aside constantly to show upon his stage the faithfulness of the slave who really owed his master nothing but his manual labour. Increasing refinement, if not humanity, must have revolted against continuous and barbarous punishments, and houses where the lash and the cry of anguish were often heard must have been avoided because it was coarse and disagreeable, if not because it was tyrannous and unjust to exercise such barbarous control. But the frightful possibilities were always there, though we have no Greek "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to display them to us.

Slavery a cause of inhumanity.

Certain redeeming features of slavery do not affect the possibilities of cruelty.

Such, then, is my estimate of this wonderful moment in the world's history. I have striven to avoid all exaggeration, to get rid of the prejudices of the pedant, the

strong and just prepossessions of the Christian; whatever was there to censure and to blame, I have not scrupled to put it forward, and take discount from the sum of the obligations under which the Greeks have laid us. And I have paused here, in the middle of my work, to make up the account, because there is in Greek history, with the death of Philip, with the collapse of Demosthenes's policy, a strange and complete halt, and a new beginning, which broke completely with the past.

Death of Philip and fall of Demosthenes mark the end of a political phase

The Greece known in our schools and colleges is only the older Greece, before it really came to influence a large part of the world. Because the style of Thucydides and Xenophon is purer than that of Polybius and of Plutarch, these latter, great and instructive as they are, have no place in the education of our youth. I need not point out to any educated man how false this perspective is, how in earlier times Plutarch influenced the greatest men, or was justly esteemed the most precious possession left us by the Greeks. It is high time that all partial views of this kind should be laid aside, and that as we admire the Parthenon and its matchless relief, so we should also wonder at the *Nike* of Samothrace and the Greek tomb of the king of Sidon at Constantinople, not to say the Venus of Melos, all of them work inferior to nothing that Hellenic sculpture has left us. In language, indeed, the very fact that the knowledge of Greek spread to various foreign lands made it necessary that some of the exquisite refinement of Plato or Demosthenes should be lost. Any language which aspires to be a *Weltsprache* (world-language), as the Germans say, must sacrifice much of its delicacy, its shades of meaning expressed by many synonyms and particles and tenses, which the foreigner in his hurry and

The wide-spread neglect of post-classical writers.

Spread of Greek language a natural cause of loss of precision and delicacy.

without contact with natives cannot be expected to master. But the very power of accommodation in the Greeks was one of the most wonderful features in the people. For though exceedingly proud, though despising other languages and compelling all those who aspired to their civilization to be at pains to learn their tongue—no small effort before the day of scientific grammars—they yet so accommodated themselves to Macedonian, Syrian, Roman masters that they became indispensable in the household, or the diplomatic, or the military, service of all these nations.

Greek adaptability.

These are the reasons that the present book, departing from the usual practice, will devote a large space to the development of Hellenistic (as opposed to Hellenic) culture through and in consequence of the conquests of Alexander and the sovereignties of his successors.

It is not a little curious, how much more attractive, at first sight, the later work was than the earlier and purer. When the discoveries of the Renaissance burst upon Europe, it was the Apollo Belvedere, the Farnese Hercules, the Venus de Medici, and the architecture of Hadrian which fascinated the world. To men like Raphael and Michael Angelo, the Parthenon and the Temple of Pæstum were things unknown and neglected, while all their enthusiasm was reserved for the work which the Romans had borrowed from Pergamum, Rhodes, and Alexandria during what is called the "period of Greek decadence." They did not even appreciate the difference which we think so striking between the few genuine pieces of old Greek work and the feebler though more ornate work of the later epoch. If any one is tempted to judge these men of the Renaissance harshly, let him remember that the most cultivated Romans, who had before them all the splendour of the

Neglect of earlier and purer Greek art in Renaissance period.

Golden Age intact, nevertheless both in literature and in art long preferred the later models, and copied from Parthenius and Callimachus, from Tauriscus and Pasiteles, long before they were led to believe that the older work was better. Even then they went to the opposite extreme, and preferred archaic things because they were stiff and odd to the perfect moment when archaic modesty and reserve are combined with modern grace and mastery of material. So difficult is it to judge correctly of the work of our predecessors.

Parallel of the Roman attitude to the art of the Golden Age.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TIME OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND HIS EARLY SUCCESSORS.*

PERHAPS the best way to approach the work which Alexander did for Greek civilization and to estimate its value is to speculate for a moment on what would possibly have happened had he not come to the throne. It is idle to say that Greece was free during the closing years of his father Philip's reign. That able prince had shown clearly that with the aid of a hardy nation of mountaineers devoted to his house, with money to hire troops of mercenaries, with the chiefs of Thessaly supplying him with cavalry, all chance of real independence was gone for a set of small states which were mutually jealous, mutually distrustful, and which were each quite ready to call him in to settle its quarrels, provided he would humble its rivals. All this was plainly seen by Isocrates in Philip's lifetime, as we may see from his "Letter to Philip," already commented on. We may therefore say with confidence that all possibility of a great and united Greece, observing the independence of each state and combining against every common enemy, was gone. This was of course the ideal condition of which many had dreamed.

Alexander's influence on Greek civilization.

Impossibility of a united Greece.

Hardly more practical was the notion that Greece should be led by one dominant power, which should guide all foreign policy, while internal affairs were left

* All this period has been treated in fuller detail in my "Greek Life and Thought from Alexander to the Roman Conquest" (2d edition).

to the individual cities. Three leading states had attempted this: first Sparta, then Athens, then Sparta again, then Thebes. In every case, except the first, the dominant power had at once taken advantage of its leading position to gratify private jealousies, to avenge old griefs, to enrich private citizens at the expense of the lesser states. And in every case this sort of federation under a leading power showed symptoms of becoming a tyranny, an irresponsible rule by the military power which could coerce if it could not persuade. Hence the growing feeling in Greece had been against such *hegemony*, as they called it, and in favour of *autonomy*, or home rule, in every city state. There were indeed a few exceptions among the poorer and more insignificant mountain tribes, which had no real cities, but dwelt in little fortified places so called, and which were now crystallizing into federations in Ætolia, Achæa, and Acarnania, destined ere long to take a prominent part in Greek politics. There was also some such league in the mountainous Lycia, but the greater cities in Asia Minor had long been under the sway of Persia; many of them had been dismantled: Smyrna, for example, and Ephesus were now only groups of scattered villages,* and here all political life seemed dead.

Greek dislike of a hegemony.

The outlook therefore in politics seemed very hopeless. No state seemed likely to lead, and, if willing, would not be allowed to lead; internecine wars were wasting the youth and strength of the country; commerce was suffering greatly by these foolish quarrels, and the glories of Greece seemed so completely passed away, at least politically, that the first vigorous and

Gloomy political outlook.

*It was the policy of Alexander's early successors (Antigonus, Lysimachus) to refound these cities, but they were not free from the modern vanity of renaming them after themselves.

fresh nation of invaders was sure to do what the Dorians had done of old, and overrun most of the country with ease. In the earlier days of Demosthenes, when a vigorous king, Darius Ochus, came to the Persian throne, there was considerable apprehension in Greece that the policy of Xerxes would be renewed, and if this had really taken place, now that Epaminondas was dead, and that the mercenary generals could obtain far higher pay from the great king than Athens or Thebes could afford to give them, it is more than likely that Greece would have succumbed like Asia Minor, and its famous liberties have been quenched in a mean old age of subjection to the barbarian. It was Philip and his Macedonians who formed the real bar to such an invasion, and yet the Greeks so hated Philip that they would even have sided with the Persian to overthrow him, hoping to make terms for themselves when their dreaded neighbour was removed.

Macedonia the only bar to a Persian invasion.

When the news came that Philip was assassinated there was nothing but open joy in Greece. The league which he had forced upon the Greeks at Corinth, by which they were to combine under him in a great campaign against Persia, was at once dissolved. He had taken the first steps; he had sent on troops to the Dardanelles; he was eagerly stretching out his hand to pluck the fruit of all his labours in strategy and in diplomacy, when the knife of the assassin struck him. It was no blow struck for the liberty of Greece, but mere vulgar vengeance for a personal affront which Philip refused to redress. The private life of Philip was such as does not bear inquiry here. He fell a victim to the vices which he practised and tolerated at his court, and which stained and marred his greatness.

Greek rejoicing at death of Philip.

Philip's vices.

Everything promised the grumbling and discontented

Uncertainty of Macedonian succession.

Greeks a relief from Macedonian domination. Philip had been slain in the flower of his age, without a moment of notice; no preparations were made for the succession, unless we count as such the various intrigues of several claimants, both older and younger than Alexander. It was more than likely that a civil war would ensue.

Alexander's greatness not to be ascribed to Aristotle's influence.

But the genius of Alexander soon crushed all the expectations of his enemies. He had been brought up at the quiet Mieza, far from the immoral and disorderly court of Philip, under the care of Aristotle, whom Philip with consummate judgment had chosen for the task. Never did such a master have such a pupil. And yet nothing is more remarkable—I do not hold it strange—than the complete independence and originality of Alexander's ideas. We cannot find one feature of his policy, or of his daily life, which can be fairly attributed to Aristotle's influence. At all times and among all men, the influence of education is wont to be exaggerated. There seems to be a constant tendency to attribute anything which a man does to some advice he has got from somebody else. It is far nearer the truth to say that every man comes into the world a distinct being, with a character which education can only sometimes modify, but which it can never change. The conditions of this character lie in the parents, perhaps even in the ancestors, and are transmitted by them unconsciously with their physical characteristics to their offspring. Alexander's parents were both strong and dominating characters. They were possessed both of beauty and of very passionate tempers. Yet we know only too well that no known combination of clever parents will secure a clever offspring. The great majority of those supreme intellects which have trans-

Innate greatness of Alexander.

formed the world have sprung from obscure or insignificant parents. When such appear, their educators, even were they Aristotles, can do little more than watch with wonder their developments.

We have not a word, even of allusion, in Aristotle's many works to this subject, which would have been to us far more interesting than his metaphysics, or his natural history of the lower animals. But there is ground for asserting that as Aristotle's studies in "Politics" are completely antiquated in the light of Alexander's conquest, as the whole range of Aristotle's political vision is confined to the little Greek states of previous centuries, and ignores the great empire which he saw created, as it were by magic, before his eyes, so there must have been many other points in which Alexander chose to differ from his great instructor. The young king's Greek style was bad; that we know from the text of his open letter to Darius, which he intended all the world to read. But style was perhaps the only corner of culture to which we may suppose Aristotle indifferent, and therefore no zealous teacher thereof. The work recently recovered, which the ancients attributed to his pen, if it be indeed his, gives us even a poorer idea than we had already of his writing, as compared with his thinking.

Alexander's view broader than Aristotle's.

His Greek style bad.

It is, however, very probable that though Aristotle could not make him think in any Aristotelian line, he helped him, were it only by his opposition, to think for himself, if it be indeed thinking, and not some higher spontaneous power, which enables a genius to solve without trouble problems that are the despair of ordinary men. His military training was not theoretical but practical; as a boy of seventeen or eighteen he took a leading part in the great battle of Chæronea and his flatterers after-

Alexander's practical military training.

wards attributed to him the lion's share of the victory. But Diodorus's account is so meagre and so full of vague rhetoric, that we do not even know whether Alexander fought with the cavalry, as was his constant practice afterwards, or whether he commanded a phalanx of infantry. At all events, he had, when he was suddenly called to the succession, actual practice in battle; he had, moreover, been involved in angry disputes with his father, and must have been rapidly learning how to discern his faithful friends and how to evade or overcome the plots of his rivals and enemies. His education therefore in political intrigues must have been very advanced for his age. Upon his succession, however, he settled such difficulties by simply putting to death those whom he suspected, in this acting as every Macedonian king, in that polygamous court, felt compelled to do for his personal safety.

Alexander at Chæronea.

He puts his rivals to death.

Of course Greece prepared to rise against him. The Hellenic people had no traditional or other loyalty to bind them to his allegiance. They had pledged themselves to his father Philip personally; had Philip met with any reverse in war their pledge would not have been kept for a day. But Alexander did not give them time for any open revolt. He appeared with his army, and exacted from them, as his father had done, a pledge that they would serve with him against Persia. Then he returned home, and set out for the first of his expeditions, the campaign through Thrace to the Danube, and home again by way of Illyria. This was the time when he saw an embassy of Gauls or Galatæ, who sent to ask his friendship. The story goes that he asked them of what they were most afraid, and that they answered: "Of nothing, except that the sky might fall." The anecdote is only worth repeating to show

He exacts a pledge from the Greeks.

Alexander's first expedition.

the character of these marauders, only too well known in after history, and also to indicate that they were already looking westward for new settlements. Very probably their invasion of the Balkan Peninsula was only delayed by their knowledge of Alexander's power.

However, in this "preliminary canter" against barbarians, living in a difficult country with mountain passes and rivers, Alexander not only made trial of the marching power of his army, but obtained through his conquests the adhesion of mountaineers who furnished him with his most valuable light troops.

Insurrection of Thebans.

His absence and then the positive news of his death was enough to set Greece again aflame. He heard suddenly in the Illyrian country that his garrison at Thebes, which was the most insubordinate of his Greek allies, inasmuch as it had most recently been the most dominant, was besieged and hard pressed in the citadel. So he burst like a thunder cloud upon Greece, this time in earnest about these Greek revolts.

Thebes razed to the ground.

Thebes was stormed with great massacre, but razed to the ground and the inhabitants sold as slaves, not by his order, but by the vote of the neighbouring Bœotian towns, to whom he committed the decision. In order to gratify old hatreds, in order to secure for themselves some of the confiscated land, these neighbours passed a vote of absolute destruction upon one of the oldest and most celebrated cities in Greece. It was Alexander, and not these wretched creatures, who spared the house of the poet Pindar, and of those who claimed to be his descendants. Such considerations affected a Macedonian king; they would never have affected a Hellenic peasant. Nothing but a Macedonian fortress remained to show where Thebes had stood. But after this stern lesson, Alexander showed

Alexander spares the house of Pindar.

clemency and humanity. He left dangerous opponents such as Demosthenes and the orators opposed to Macedonia free at Athens; he insisted on no murders, confiscations, or dismantling of fortifications—generous and large minded himself, he may have hoped that he would be requited by some gratitude, by some consideration from the men whose lives he had spared. But his hopes were vain. It is the stain upon his opponents which we meet in so many other centuries of Greek history. Gratitude seems to them an unknown virtue. All the rest of his life Demosthenes kept planning and plotting against him, negotiating with the Persian king, and spreading disaffection with Persian gold in Greece. At last he was even charged with embezzling this gold for his own use. And yet it is Demosthenes who commands all the sympathies of the historians. Not even the gallant and simple Phocion, whose soul was so pure as to raise him above all the falsehood and the meanness of the times, who clearly saw through and repudiated the policy of Demosthenes, can obtain from them more than scant praise.

Clemency of Alexander.

Demosthenes plots against Alexander.

Why is so strange a result possible? How can learned and honest men blind themselves so completely to the facts? Simply because Demosthenes was a great orator, who has told us his own story, whereas the case against him is told by inferior men, and by those whom he has persuaded us to have been dishonest. But the false estimate of Demosthenes as a politician is the natural product of those commentators who spend so many years in expounding the perfections of his eloquence that they cannot endure to admit a single fault in the man.

Usual historical estimate of Demosthenes is false.

The false and misguided patriotism of Demosthenes had very fatal results. If he and the other leading poli-

ticians had loyally accepted the situation, and helped Alexander not only with the arms of their states, but with their brains, his whole attitude to Greece would have been changed. He certainly began with every consideration for them; he even spoke out about the strange contrast of Hellenic and Macedonian society, calling the former gentlemen and the latter boors; he desired above all things to be known as the leader of the Greeks, not of the Macedonians, against Persia. The stupid and unworthy conduct of the leading cities soon made him change his mind. Though he was always ready to promote individual Greeks that served him well, he found in the conquered Persians more loyalty, more honesty, more desire to do his will; and so Athens and Thebes lost an opportunity of guiding the course of history which never recurred.

Alexander loses patience with the Greeks.

The case of Sparta was even more striking, and the conduct of Alexander, and indeed of Philip, regarding it is well worth our consideration. Both kings were with their armies at Corinth, where all the Greeks assembled and accepted their presidency. But there was one notable exception. Sparta would take no part in the congress, and refused to acquiesce except by its moody silence in the decision of all Hellas. It was certainly within the power of either to conquer the city. The campaign in Thrace and across the Danube, from which Alexander had just returned victorious, offered far greater difficulties, and moreover difficulties were exactly what Alexander loved. Why then did both Philip and Alexander spare Sparta in spite of her sulky impertinence? I can suggest no other reason than this, that Sparta was now the nurse of the best mercenary soldiers in Greece. Not only were they personally brave soldiers, with old traditions of valour, but they commanded

Alexander's indulgence toward Sparta.

Reasons for mild treatment of Sparta.

the respect of all other Hellenes, who were content to serve under a Spartan when they were most jealous of any other officer. Hence a good understanding with the Spartans was of considerable importance to generals who desired an efficient mercenary contingent from Greece. The great majority of the men of Sparta were growing poor; the land was passing into fewer hands; the rest were idle and discontented, and ready at any moment to go off to the great mart of mercenaries at Tænaron. If Sparta were taken by an enemy, all these people would sail away and join the Persian army in Asia Minor. It was therefore not only contemptuously generous, but politic, to leave Spartans free to join the Macedonian army, and fight under a king who had at least refrained from invading Laconia. Accordingly the Spartans were left in their proud isolation, posing as the purest and most aristocratic of Greeks, looked up to as men of blue blood and lofty traditions, while their poverty compelled them to go abroad and fight other men's quarrels for pay.

Importance of Spartan mercenaries.

But soldiering even as mercenaries has always been looked upon by aristocrats as more respectable than any peaceable trade. There is in the profession of arms idleness, adventure, and a chance of great prizes; and if Aristotle inquires in one of his "Problems" why actors are usually very bad characters, and solves it by pointing out the strong contrasts of wealth and poverty, of idleness and work, in fact all the ups and downs of their lives, he might have said much the same of mercenary soldiers. Be it remembered also that these mercenaries were far more than a mere guard for a king, like the Scottish archers of Louis XI., or the Swiss guard of the pope. They were great bodies of men with their own generals, as we know from

Mercenary soldiering an honourable profession.

Xenophon, and were often intrusted with a whole campaign by subsequent kings. We know of one Ætolian Scopas, in the next century, whose pay was two hundred dollars per day.

Now to all these people the expedition of Alexander was an extraordinary good fortune. At first many of them got large Persian pay for fighting against him under Mentor and Memnon, the Rhodians; but these seem to have been cut to pieces at the first battle (of the Granicus). It is indeed clear that the Persian grandees commanding their native cavalry did not trust the Greek infantry, and left them in reserve until the battle was lost. But though Alexander treated his Greek prisoners as traitors to the cause and to the treaty of Corinth, and set them to work in the Macedonian mines, though his succeeding campaign was one tide of success, a large division of mercenaries was present on the Persian side at the battle of Issus, and fought with bravery against him, thus showing how ingrained was the habit of serving for pay, and how little sentiment these adventurers possessed. For it is well-nigh absurd to say, as Grote does, that the Persian cause was now the real cause of Greece. That eminent radical historian can see nothing in Alexander but the man who superseded the little quarrelling Greek democracies, with their parliaments and liberties, by the great empire of the East in which Hellas formed but a small province. If the Persian had indeed won, if Alexander had been killed at the Granicus, would the world not have fared far worse than it did? Were not four centuries of city politics quite sufficient to discover all their virtues, to extract all the art and poetry and philosophy they were likely to give to mankind; and was not the time come for a larger scope, a greater

Profits to mercenary soldiers from Alexander's expedition.

Grote's injustice to Alexander.

Modern view that the mission of Alexander was no misfortune to Greece.

diffusion in Hellenic culture? These are the reasons why most modern historians esteem the mission of Alexander as no misfortune for Greece.

Of course its first and immediate effect was to make the use of Greek a necessity for the composite army which went into Asia. It is quite clear that there was no attempt to impose Macedonian, as the language of the conquerors, upon the world, though it was kept up with pride and used at special meetings of the Macedonian soldiery for some generations. But Greek became so completely the language of the new empire that all Alexander's official correspondence, nay even his letters to his mother, and the Royal Diary of his life, were kept in that tongue. There were intimate moments when the king would exclaim something in Macedonian and when his soldiers would shout applause in that language. But throughout the East the Macedonians are called Greeks by all their subjects. Yet of course the delicacies of the language, the use of various dialects, the graces of composition suffered by this adoption. We find almost suddenly a dialect called the "common," which is derived from, or similar to, Attic, but which has many peculiarities, not yet fully explained, for its history is quite obscure. It grew up in camps and marts without any systematic teaching, and we wonder how it kept as pure as we find it in the remote provinces of Egypt in the next century.* There were individual cities indeed in Thessaly, Asia Minor, Crete, which still set up decrees couched in the local dialects; but for all business purposes the language at last became uniform.

Adoption of Greek in Macedonia.

The "common" dialect.

* This we now know from the many *Petrie Papyri* dating from 260-20 which I have deciphered and published for the Royal Irish Academy, and which give us the dialect in an earlier and purer form than any extant book. The Septuagint translation of the Old Testament is about the same age, but done by men who were not Greeks and moreover had their freedom of style shackled by their close adhesion to the Hebrew original; hence their work can hardly be called a fair specimen of the average Greek of the time.

It is needless to dilate upon the enormous advantage which this expansion and unification of the language produced upon civilization. Men who could formerly hardly understand each other in Greece could now meet as members of the same society; many civilized orientals who were formerly regarded as mere barbarians could now teach their old traditions, their arts, their religion to the once proud and exclusive Hellenes. We may well prophesy of that age: "Knowledge shall increase and men shall run to and fro." The precious things of the East were domiciled in Europe; the precious things of the West found their way to Asia and to Egypt, and if the orientals were far superior in handicrafts, the Greeks were still far superior in art. Great sculptors and painters still flourished in Greece, notably Apelles the colourist, and Lysippus the artist in bronze. Apelles is to us a mere name, but the copies of Lysippus's work which remain, for example the young athlete with the *strigil*,* in the Vatican at Rome show that he was worthy of the greatest traditions of his great race.

Advantages from the spread of Hellenism.

Apelles and Lysippus.

We now also know that he stood not alone, but that nameless men of his generation could do work which puts to shame all modern sculpture. It is but the other day that there was found at Saida (Sidon) the family vault of a Sidonian king which contains several marble coffins of the purest Greek style. The principal one is adorned on all four sides with scenes of battle and of chase in which Macedonians, Greeks, and Persians take part—in the chase as friends and comrades, in the battle as foes. The choice of subjects, and the apparent prominence of a figure known as representing the type of Alexander, prove the work to have been done in his generation; some foolish people even asserted that it

Sarcophagus of a Sidonian king.

* *I. e.*, the scraper with which he is cleaning the oil and dust from his limbs.

was his tomb. From its prominence in the midst of the tombs of earlier and later Sidonian kings we may infer it with good reason to be that of the Sidonian king whom Alexander patronized; perhaps the Philocles who helped the first Ptolemy in his wars. At all events, what we have before us is a perfectly pure and splendid piece of Greek art brought to Sidon and deposited there.

A treasure of Greek art at Sidon.

Happily the modern traveller can now see this inestimable treasure not at Saida on a barren coast, where, as Ezechiel prophesied, instead of wealth and splendour the fisher now spreads his nets, but in a museum of Constantinople, where the anxious and intelligent care of the discoverer, Hamdi Bey, has put together every fragment which sacrilegious hands had broken, and has set up, under a safe cover of glass, this monument which stands second only to the Parthenon friezes in excellence of design, while it far surpasses them in richness of execution. The silver bridles, the silver spears and swords, have been wrenched from the hands of the figures that held them, but these figures are mostly perfect, retaining even the original colours, with which the artist had adorned the cold marble.

Preserved in museum of Constantinople.

This discovery tells us with a clearer voice than all our books what Hellenic art, and so Hellenic culture, was, in the generation when Alexander spread it over a large part of Asia. The splendid publication wherein Hamdi Bey has pictured and described his discovery is naturally very costly, but ought to be in every public library of America.* The first feature in these

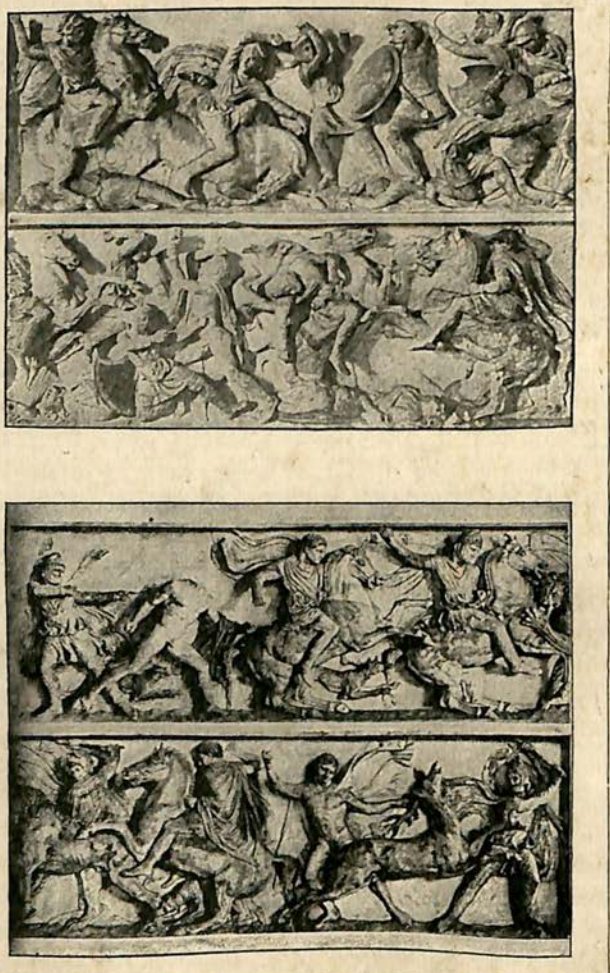
Its importance for the history of art.

* "Une Nécropole royale de Sidon," by Hamdi Bey and Theodore Reinach, Paris, Leroux, 1892-4. The fourth and last volume has not yet appeared (1895). But even in this noble book, which has made full use of the existing resource of photography, the colours of the original are not yet reproduced. Let us hope that the great advance—the reproduction of the natural colours—which my friend Mr. Joly has recently made in Trinity College will soon be applied to this work, and so give to the remote world a perfect copy of so unique a masterpiece.

remarkable compositions is the studied equality of the three great races, Persian, Macedonian, Greek. They are perfectly marked out by their dress or want of dress. For the Greek infantry seems to fight quite nude, we may presume for artistic reasons, rather than the reproduction of fact; the Macedonians are all on horseback, and clothed down to the wrist and ankle, as might be expected from people coming from a cold and mountainous country. But the Persians are even more closely clad, and have a cap which includes a muffler around the mouth, thus reminding us that the great nation which so long ruled the East was also a nation bred and hardened in rugged and cold mountains. In nobility of type and beauty of countenance the artist clearly gives the palm to the Persians. But they are all represented with blue eyes and ruddy hair, this too for artistic reasons; for black hair and swarthy skin would have marred the harmony of colour which pervades the whole composition. In the war scene there is a distinct advantage allowed to the Macedonians; none of their chiefs on horseback are defeated, whereas the leading Persian, perhaps the father of the owner of the tomb, is represented as falling from his horse dead, and supported by his anxious followers. On the other hand, in the hunting scenes the Persians are foremost, and contending both on horse and on foot with valour against the lion and the panther. These wild animals and the dogs are decidedly inferior to the men and horses in their drawing; as regards the wild animals, it is easily accounted for by the want of living models under which the Greek artists suffered. Why the dogs are not so well given as the horses I am at a loss to explain. There is a murder scene on one of the ends of the sarcophagus, which no one has yet been able to explain.

Dress of the Persians, Macedonians, and Greeks represented.

Detailed description of the sarcophagus.



SCULPTURE ON THE SARCOPHAGUS OF A SIDONIAN KING. (See page 237.)

We have therefore a living picture of what Alexander meant by the marriage of Europe and Asia. It was not merely that Macedonian grandees should marry Persian princesses; it implied the social combination of all that was noble and manly in both races, and more especially of Macedonians rather than Greeks, on account of their open-air habits and the love of sport which only aristocrats with large domains in wild country can gratify. The Greeks were more fit for office work, for the intelligence department, for diplomatic wiles. But they were not an aristocracy, like the other two, unless it be the Spartans, whose sullen refusal kept them aloof.* Thus it is characteristic that among all Alexander's leading men, there was but one Greek, Eumenes of Cardia, who was his confidential secretary and whose great ability secured the foremost position in the disputes which succeeded the conqueror's death. But it is equally significant that his being a Greek was an insuperable obstacle to his keeping the command over Macedonian soldiers. He could win battles with them, but his success, if against a Macedonian noble, was rather resented than applauded, even by his own troops. Thus he fell a victim to their treachery.

Eumenes of Cardia.

But though the Greeks may have felt that so far they were an inferior race—the Persian nobles had always despised them as venal mercenaries—they must have seen perfectly that the Macedonian conquest opened all the world to their talents. The education of the Macedonians was unequal to the administration of so vast a dominion. In every office of government, in the command of many remote dependencies, in all sorts of intellectual work, the Greeks were indispensable; as

Results for the Greeks of the Macedonian conquest.

* The fact of the Spartans fighting for pay of course lowered them in the social esteem of the more chivalrous races.

explorers, as envoys to foreign potentates, such as the remote kings of India, they were equally so. And what shall we say of trade? It is hardly possible now to estimate the extraordinary stimulus given to trade and commerce, not only by the opening up of Asia and Egypt to the western world, but perhaps even more by the freeing from the Persian treasure-houses at Susa and at Pasargadæ of the hoards of gold which had there been accumulated for centuries. There was indeed among the Phœnicians some attempt at token money. But throughout inner Asia merchants could only trade (if not by barter) with coin, and so long as current coin was only silver or copper, the weight to be carried made large transactions with distant lands almost impossible. When millions of gold and precious stones were scattered or lost among the soldiers, and made their way into business hands, the trader found that he could now carry in his belt more money value than he had formerly laden upon a camel. The issue, therefore, of Alexander's gold currency must have been almost like the invention of bank notes as compared with actual coin.

Stimulus to trade given by gold currency.

With all this stir in the mercantile world there came a great increase of luxury. The successful soldier is usually a spendthrift and is lavish of his loot; the "Miles Gloriosus" of the time is a common figure on the comic stage, and ridiculed for his vulgar ostentation.* But although the cultivated Athenian might deride the extravagance of the common mercenary, who had risen from indigence to sudden wealth, it was not so when he came to see royal courts, with the refinements of ancient and traditional splendour. Even the great king of Macedon when he entered the suite of tents which Darius had

Increase of luxury.

* The extant Plautine play of that name is taken from a Greek model of this period.

left behind in his flight from Issus, when he saw the bathrooms, dressing rooms, ante-chambers, under canvas, and the royal table laid ready with precious plate and ware, exclaimed to his officers: "Well! this is indeed to live like a king." He took care to adopt this princely luxury, and so increased the appointments of his table that he presently had to fix two thousand dollars as the daily allowance. This of course included the large retinue which dined, if not at the king's table, at least in the room, as well as the many extravagances and the wastefulness which mark a royal kitchen.

Alexander imitates Persian luxury.

His assumption of oriental royalty went so far as the assertion of his own divinity, and this, as it is a somewhat disputed point, and as it had a great effect on the sentiment of the Hellenistic Greeks, it is well to explain at some length. It had long been the practice in Greece to give to a founder and benefactor of a free city the honours of a tomb, treated as that of a hero. Thus the town of Amphipolis buried the Spartan hero Brasidas in the market-place, and had a sacred enclosure about it, where periodical libations and offerings were made in honour of him.* This honour did not as yet go so far as actual worship, but was such as may now be seen in Upper Egypt and Nubia, where the tombs of departed sheiks have a chapel built over them, to which the population, though Mohammedan, and strictly monotheistic, bring periodical offerings.

Asserts his divinity.

But the tendency to honour men with the honour due to the gods did not stop there. When Lysander had crushed the Athenian power (405 B. C.) and was practically—though not even king at Sparta—lord of the Hellenic world, we hear† that to him first of the Greeks

Deification of Lysander.

* *Cf.* Thucydides, Book V., Chap. II.
† Plutarch's "Lysander," Chap. XVIII.

the (liberated) cities set up altars as to a god, and sacrificed, and to him first they sang pæans, of which one begins thus:

Pæan to Lysander.

"The general of Greece, from the broad-winged Sparta, we shall praise in hymns, Oh! Pæan, Healer!"

and the people of Samos even decreed to call their Heræa (feast of Hera) *Lysandrea.*

It is very likely that this deification was as yet confined to the Asiatic Greek cities. They had been long used to the Persian royalty, and the Asiatic subjects of the great king had never been very chary of giving such honour to a monarch whose daily service contained an etiquette approaching very closely in its prostrations to the reverence given to a deity. It is therefore certain that the Greeks were quite prepared, by previous instances, to recognize such a claim in a sovereign whose deeds seemed superior to those of ordinary men. We must also remember that according to the Greek religion, as expounded by the old poets and practised by the priests, the gulf between the god and the man was by no means so insurmountable as it is to us.

Reasons why the Greeks recognized Alexander's claim to divinity.

Thus it was no great stretch of belief on the part of any man then living in Greece to think that so wonderful a person as Alexander was of divine origin, nor was it difficult to persuade the king himself, who felt strongly the inspiration of his genius, that he was no ordinary mortal. He could indeed be wounded or even killed in battle, but were not the very gods in Homer's Iliad wounded, and had not many sons of gods died violent deaths at the hands of their enemies? The visit to Ammon's temple in the oasis of Siwah had indeed all the appearance of being a political device to obtain the sanction of that famous shrine to his claim, but with the young Alexander the claim was probably quite serious,

Alexander's visit to the Temple of Ammon.

and not the least intended to deceive. It is very remarkable that his first child, the son of Barsine, the widow of Memnon, his principal opponent in Asia Minor, was called Heracles. I am not aware that any Greek ever ventured to call his son by such a name; for Heracles was the most famous son of Zeus and Alcmena. This simple fact proves to us that he was determined on asserting his divinity, which was readily accepted not only by the orientals, but by the Asiatic Greeks, and very soon by the Hellenic race generally. Thus when the king quarrelled with his army at Opis, the mutinous Macedonians bade him carry on his wars with the aid of his father Ammon, upon which he leaped from his platform, and causing thirteen of them to be seized, put them to death at once.

Alexander names his son Heracles.

These considerations show it to be in no way incredible that he should send home to Greece, ordering the cities, even Athens and Sparta, to pay him divine honour. Nor would there have been the smallest difficulty in their acquiescence had he not accompanied this order with another, which affected their pockets. He ordered all their exiles to be restored to their homes. That meant, as I have already explained, a return of property, which had changed hands, from the present owners to those who had formerly held it. No transaction of the kind can take place in any state, ancient or modern, without shaking confidence in contract, and without annulling many honest sales, and inflicting incalculable hardships on many honest people. But as regards the admission of divinity by Athenians, we know that within twenty years of this time they volunteered to confer the title of "Saviour Gods" on Antigonus and his son Demetrius (the Besieger), and when the latter came to Athens, the worship of him as a divine person and his association

Alexander orders restoration of the exiles.

with the virgin goddess in the Parthenon were so effusive and disgusting as to shock even the people of that day.

Before the year 300 B. C. every Hellenistic king had begun to assert his own divinity, to claim descent from Heracles, or Apollo, or Dionysus, to have a priest and an altar, and to associate his own worship with that of the principal gods in his city. We have already seen it in the case of Demetrius, we know that Seleucus at Antioch made the same claim, as did also Ptolemy in Egypt, and though systematized and extended in after generations, the idea was adopted from Alexander himself by the first Diadochi. It was from these royalties that the worship of the emperor was taken by Augustus, and set up as the one uniform cult of the Roman Empire. This is one of the ideas in which the Hellenistic world differs profoundly from any mediæval or modern societies, and yet the kings who in the Middle Ages asserted their divine right, the pope who asserted his infallibility, were not very far removed from the other claim, as a Greek would understand it.

Cult of Roman emperors imitated from Hellenistic kings.

The effect upon the Hellenistic kings was, however, much the same as the lesser claim upon their mediæval successors. It caused both to regard themselves above the ordinary laws of morality. The result could not but be disastrous as well to themselves as to the people who came in contact with them. This may be shown in various instances. To take the most obvious, they were all polygamous, they made and broke alliances as they thought convenient. The queens and princesses of those days were not ashamed, but proud of the number of their husbands. They were just as free of their persons as the princes. Take the case of Arsinoe, daughter of the first Ptolemy. First she is married to Lysimachus, king of Thrace. one of her father's companions,

Disastrous moral effect of assumption of divinity.

and probably forty years her senior. After his death in battle and the murder of Seleucus, his conqueror, by her half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos, she is induced by him to become his wife, whereupon he promptly murders her children, and she flies, or is exiled, to a refuge in the sacred island of Samothrace. But after a while she returns to Egypt, where her full brother Ptolemy II. was now king; and she so manages to influence him that she persuades him to divorce his wife, who had borne him children, and raise her, his full sister, to the dignity of "sister and wife," as the queen of Egypt was called.

Adventures of Arsinoe.

In this her last adventure she attained to great power and importance; her name and bust appear upon coins, she is worshipped in the temples as "the goddess that loves her brother"; she is paid the due of one sixth upon all the vineyards and gardens in Egypt, which had hitherto been paid to the local temples; she dies in power and splendour, leaving her husband disconsolate. This was the ancestress of a line of queens which ended with the famous, or rather notorious, Cleopatra VI., who, if she was a worthy descendant of such a race, was hardly an exceptional one.

The worship of Arsinoe.

But Arsinoe is one only of a whole gallery of desperate ladies, who stain the annals of that period with their violence and their crime. Olympias, the queen mother of Alexander, was all her life a woman of violent passions and jealous temper. The later legends of the life of Alexander, which we know under the name of Callisthenes, ascribe to her other vices, of which history knows nothing beyond the suspicion that the great Alexander could not have been the son of a mortal father. But according to Egyptian legend, the last king of Egypt, Nectanebo, who had mysteriously dis-

Olympias.

appeared, and who was accounted a magician, had gone to Macedon, and there under the form of a serpent appeared to Olympias, and become the father of Alexander. By this fable the Egyptians strove to show that the conqueror was after all their legitimate sovereign. Nor were the Persians behind hand. They too invented a legend to show the legitimacy of Alexander as king of Persia.*

Legends about the birth of Alexander.

But when the kings began to claim divine descent, some allowance must be made for the conduct of their mothers. Yet this too is to be remembered, that in Egypt at least, the divine origin of a king, though expressly asserted, was in no way supposed to interfere with the paternity of his earthly father. The second Ptolemy, who was the son of Ra, and a god, was at the same time the son of Ptolemy Soter and Berenike. These are attitudes of mind which it is vain for us to explain and vindicate; we can do no more than state them as historical facts.

It follows as a natural consequence that these divinized rulers kept great state, and lived after a fashion quite superior to ordinary men. They knew the effect to be obtained by gold and silver plate, rich carpets and hangings, splendid armour and jewelry, a great household with endless lords in waiting, ladies of honour, pages, household troops, and servants' servants. All this came through the court of Alexander, but originally from the Persian court, as its prototype. When the Rhodians, during the great siege of their city by Demetrius, captured some of the personal effects coming in a ship from his queen Phila, they sent them as a present to King Ptolemy, seeing that such garments of purple and such

Luxury of the Ptolemies in imitation of Alexander and the Persians.

* See the legend in Gobineau's "Histoire des Perses," Vol. II. (Paris, 1869), a very curious and original book, giving the oriental side of the Persian struggle with the West, and the view which the orientals took of Alexander.

ornaments were quite useless to any one but a king. But this Demetrius loved not only splendour of this kind he was a munificent patron of art. We know how he carefully preserved the work of Protogenes, the painter, which he found in a suburb of Rhodes.*

Demetrius a patron of art.

We still have, fairly preserved, a magnificent statue of Victory (Nike) which he set up, probably after his great sea battle with Ptolemy. It is now in the Louvre, and is known as the Nike of Samothrace. In this sacred island it stood on the side of a hill, a huge female figure standing on the prow of a ship, and blowing a trumpet in announcement of a naval victory. It has been identified by means of extant coins of Demetrius, which give the complete figure on their reverse, and is one of the most striking evidences how pure and noble Greek art still remained under the early Diadochi. What was said before of the famous tomb of Constantinople applies here also. If we were not sure of the date of this statue and of the identity of the donor, we should probably have referred it to the golden age of Hellenic art.

The statue of "Victory" in the Louvre.

Worthy of the golden age of Hellenic art.

It is remarkable that this very dissolute man's wife, Phila, maintained all her life the highest character for devotion and fidelity to her husband, and is specially praised for having taken poison when she despaired of his success. None of his vagaries or infidelities ever shook her constancy. The same high qualities are ascribed to his son Antigonus (known as Gonatas, and after many vicissitudes king of Macedon), who was always most loyal to his father, and offered his own liberty to save him from bondage. The wildest of the successors, therefore, must have been, with all his faults, a very lovable man. Probably the case was not so with

Antigonus, son of Demetrius.

* All the details about him will be found in Plutarch's most interesting "Life of Demetrius," Chaps. XXIII.–XXVIII., to which I refer the reader, both as the verification of what I say, and also for many more anecdotes than I can quote.

King Pyrrhus of Epirus, the other great knight-errant of this age, who seems not to have been able to fascinate women in spite of his genius for wars and that chivalry which forms so attractive a chapter in early Roman history.

Mercenary armies a pest at this period.

The mercenary armies of these men must have been like the armies which roamed about Germany in the Thirty Years' War, faithful only to individual leaders, and to them only so long as they were successful ; treating each other in battle with great consideration, but a ruthless pest to the peaceable population. Many of these soldiers of fortune were not even civilized Greeks, but barbarous Thracians, and, still more, barbarous Galatians, who were now pressing from the west into the Balkan Peninsula, and selling their services to the highest bidder. These were the principal perpetrators of the horrible cruelties which we hear of in this troubled time. These were the men who rifled the ancient tombs of the Macedonians and of other kings, and who were for many a day the terror of Asia Minor, so that the main glory of the Attalid kings of Pergamum was to have checked them, and to have confined them to their new home (Galatia). The old respectable citizen soldiers had disappeared. No army fought except for pay ; and the first attempt, when two forces met, was to settle the dispute by offers of money. Very often one side would desert to the other under these circumstances, and the poorer man, however righteous his cause, would find himself a general without an army. The general effect of such a system of warfare must have been most demoralizing to society. The habit of violence and treachery does not confine itself to those who habitually and cynically practise it. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The account of the conduct of the

Their demoralizing effect on society.

Athenian democracy regarding the judicial murder of Phocion is too significant not to be quoted here.

Plutarch's story of the judicial murder of Phocion.

At this juncture arrived Alexander, the son of Polyperchon,* with an army, under pretence of assisting the city against Nicanor; but, in reality, to avail himself of the fatal divisions and to seize it, if possible, for himself. For the exiles who entered the town with him, the foreigners, and such citizens as had been stigmatized as infamous, with other mean people, resorted to him, and altogether made up a strange disorderly assembly, by whose suffrage the command was taken from Phocion, and other generals appointed. Had not Alexander been seen alone near the walls in conference with Nicanor, and by repeated interviews given the Athenians cause of suspicion, the city could not have escaped the danger it was in. Immediately the orator Agnonides singled out Phocion, and accused him of treason; which so much alarmed Callimedon and Pericles that they fled out of the city. Phocion, with such of his friends as did not forsake him, repaired to Polyperchon. Solon of Platæa and Dinarchus of Corinth, who passed for the friends and confidants of Polyperchon, out of regard to Phocion, desired to be of the party. But Dinarchus falling ill by the way, they were obliged to stop many days at Elatea. In the meantime, Archestratus proposed a decree, and Agnonides got it passed, that deputies should be sent to Polyperchon, with an accusation against Phocion.

The decree of Archestratus.

The two parties came up to Polyperchon at the same time, as he was upon his march with the king, near Pharuges, a town of Phocis. . . . There Polyperchon placed the king under a golden canopy, and his friends on each side of him; and, before he proceeded to any other business, gave orders that Dinarchus should be put to the torture, and afterwards despatched. This done, he gave the Athenians audience. But as they filled the place with noise and tumult, interrupting each other with mutual accusations to the council, Agnonides pressed forward and said, "Put us all in one cage and send us back to Athens, to give account of our conduct there." The king laughed at the proposal; but the Macedonians who attended on that occasion, and the strangers who were drawn thither by curiosity, were desirous of hearing the cause; and

* The Macedonian general.

therefore made signs to the deputies to argue the matter there. However it was far from being conducted with impartiality. Polyperchon often interrupted Phocion, who at last was so provoked that he struck his staff upon the ground and would speak no more. Hegemon said, Polyperchon himself could bear witness to his affectionate regard for the people; and that general answered, "Do you come here to slander me before the king?" Upon this the king started up and was going to run Hegemon through with his spear; but Polyperchon prevented him; and the council broke up immediately. The guards then surrounded Phocion and his party, except a few, who, being at some distance, muffled themselves up, and fled. Clitus carried the prisoners to Athens, under colour of having them tried there, but, in reality, only to have them put to death, as persons already condemned. The manner of conducting the thing made it a more melancholy scene. The prisoners were carried in carts through the Ceramicus to the theatre, where Clitus shut them up till the archons had assembled the people. From this assembly neither slaves, nor foreigners, nor persons stigmatized as infamous were excluded; the tribunal and the theater were open to all. Then the king's letter was read; the purport of which was "That he had found the prisoners guilty of treason; but that he left it to the Athenians, as free men who were to be governed by their own laws, to pass sentence upon them." At the same time Clitus presented them to the people. The best of the citizens, when they saw Phocion, appeared greatly dejected, and covering their faces with their mantles began to weep. One, however, had the courage to say, "Since the king leaves the determination of so important a matter to the people, it would be proper to command all slaves and strangers to depart." But the populace, instead of agreeing to that motion, cried out, "It would be much more proper to stone all the favourers of oligarchy, all the enemies of the people." After which no one attempted to offer anything in behalf of Phocion. It was with much difficulty that he obtained permission to speak. At last, silence being made, he said, "Do you design to take away my life justly or unjustly?" Some of them answering, "Justly," he said, "How can you know whether it will be justly, if you do not hear me first?" As he did not find them inclinable in the least to hear him, he advanced some paces forward and

Unfair trial of Phocion by the king.

He is carried to Athens.

Phocion's speech to the people.

said, "Citizens of Athens, I acknowledge I have done you injustice; and for my faults in the administration adjudge myself guilty of death; but why will you put these men to death who have never injured you?" The populace made answer, "Because they are friends to you." Upon which he drew back and resigned himself quietly to his fate.

The decree is read.

Agnonides then read the decree he had prepared; according to which the people were to declare by their suffrages whether the prisoners appeared to be guilty or not; and if they appeared so, they were to suffer death. When the decree was read, some called for an additional clause for putting Phocion to the torture before execution; and insisted that the rack and its managers should be sent for immediately. But Agnonides, observing that Clitus was displeased at that proposal, and looking upon it himself as a barbarous and detestable thing, said, "When we take that villain Callimedon, let us put him to the torture; but, indeed, my fellow-citizens, I cannot consent that Phocion should have such hard measure." Upon this, one of the better disposed Athenians cried out, "Thou art certainly right; for if we torture Phocion, what must we do to thee?" There was, however, hardly one negative when the sentence of death was proposed; all the people gave their voices standing; and some of them even crowned themselves with flowers, as if it had been a matter of festivity. . . After the assembly was dismissed the convicts were sent to prison. The embraces of their friends and relations melted them into tears, and they all went on bewailing their fate, except Phocion. His countenance was the same as when the people sent him out to command their armies; and the beholders could not but admire his invincible firmness and magnanimity. Some of his enemies, indeed, reviled him as he went along; and one of them even spit in his face; upon which, he turned to the magistrates, and said, "Will nobody correct this fellow's rudeness?" Thudippus, when he saw the executioners pounding the hemlock, began to lament what hard fortune it was for him to suffer unjustly on Phocion's account. "What then," said the venerable sage, "dost thou not think it an honour to die with Phocion?" One of his friends asking him whether he had any commands to his son; "Yes," said he, "by all means tell him from me to forget the ill-treatment I have had from the Athenians." And when Nicocles, the

He is unanimously condemned.

Phocion's firmness.

His magnanimity.

most faithful of his friends, begged that he would let him drink the poison before him; "This," said he, "Nicocles, is a hard request; and the thing must give me great uneasiness; but since I have obliged you in every instance through life, I will do the same in this." When they came all to drink the quantity proved not sufficient; and the executioner refused to prepare more, except he had twelve drachmas paid him, which was the price of a full draught. As this occasioned a troublesome delay, Phocion called one of his friends, and said, "Since one cannot die for nothing at Athens, give the man his money." This execution was on the nineteenth day of April when there was a procession of horsemen in honour of Jupiter. As the cavalcade passed by, some took off their chaplets from their heads; others shed tears, as they looked at the prison doors; all who had not hearts entirely savage, or were not corrupted by rage and envy, looked upon it as a most impious thing, not to have reprieved them at least for that day, and so to have kept the city unpolluted on the festival.

He drinks the hemlock.

However, the enemies of Phocion, as if something had been wanting to their triumph, got an order that his body should not be suffered to remain within the bounds of Attica; nor that any Athenian should furnish fire for the funeral pile. Therefore no friend durst touch it; but one Conopion, who lived by such services, for a sum of money carried the corpse out of the territories of Eleugis, and got fire for the burning of it in those of Megara. A woman of Megara who happened to assist at the ceremony with her maid servants raised a cenotaph upon the spot and performed the customary libations. The bones she gathered up carefully into her lap, carried them by night to her own house, and interred them under the hearth. At the same time she thus addressed the domestic gods: "Ye guardians of this place, to you I commit the remains of this good man; do you restore them to the sepulchre of his ancestors, when the Athenians shall once more listen to the dictates of wisdom."*

His enemies refuse Phocion funeral honours.

His bones are interred in Megara.

If these things were done at Athens which boasted to be the acme of culture and humanity, what would happen in less polished cities? What used to hap-

* Plutarch, "Phocion," Chaps. XXXIII.-XXXVII.

pen at Alexandria, where we know that the mob at times actually tore in pieces persons who had offended it? Nor is it fair to say that it was owing to the Egyptian element in the population of that great composite city. The Egyptians must have been very few, and the bloody riots, of which we hear, were carried on not in the Egyptian quarter, but among the Macedonians and Greeks, and in the fashionable part of the town. But unfortunately we only get a glimpse of such places as Alexandria when in riot, we can tell of Athens in the peaceable and ordinary days. We have some knowledge of both the frivolous and the serious society which inhabited that great centre of thought and of idleness. But as both were intellectual, we cannot but suppose that the outrage upon Phocion must have incurred the reprobation of many respectable people in that city. Nor would we suppress the counterbalancing case, of which Grote has made so much. I mean the loyalty and fidelity of the Athenians to Demosthenes, even when his policy had turned out a failure, and had brought the city into the immediate danger of capture by a victorious enemy. It was then that the firmness of the people, in refusing the extradition of the heads of the national party, shed the last ray of light upon the declining fortunes of the city. The Athenian democracy, like every other, was capable of noble acts, and performed them. It was also capable of panics, and of criminal follies prompted by paroxysms of terror or of revenge. These feelings are utterly inconsistent with each other, but not with the common human nature in which they reside.

Brutality of the mob of Alexandria.

Magnanimous treatment of Demosthenes by the Athenians.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE HELLENISTIC WORLD, 250–150 B. C.

WHEN all the immediate successors of Alexander had fought out their troubled lives over the succession, and had found their ends, most of them on the field of battle; when even the next generation of knight-errants, politicians, opportunists, had settled their main differences, and had definitively won or lost their crowns, the Hellenistic world settled down into the complex thing which ultimately came in contact with the Romans, and was swallowed up by the all-devouring republic. During the early days of this period, Rome was still struggling for the preëminence in Italy, then in Sicily, and the first rude contact with Hellenism was the conflict in southern Italy with the Greek cities, and their *condottiere*, King Pyrrhus of Epirus. There were stories current that Alexander the Great had thought of conquering the Romans, that they had sent, among the other nations of the world, an embassy of peace and of observation to the king of Babylon. We have no good evidence for these stories, and we know that during Alexander's life, and for years after it, the Romans were very busy subduing the Samnites and Lucanians, and so approaching the Greek cities on their southern coast, which led to the interference of Pyrrhus.

Rome's first contact with Hellenism in southern Italy.

This conflict, the first between the Hellenistic and Italic powers, was most interesting, and has given rise to some of the most characteristic stories—most of them inventions—on the part of the Roman historians. To

Struggle between Pyrrhus and the Romans.

Pyrrhus, who was not only a born strategist, but had published a treatise on his art, this new military power and its methods of fighting must have given many occasions for reflection. He saw immediately that he had to do with a solid infantry, such as would conquer the world for him if he could enlist it under his banner. But the prime difficulty was that this people would serve under no banner save that of their own republic. Pyrrhus had been used, all through his military life, to nothing but mercenary armies, which consisted of men ready to serve under any successful and liberal master. As soon as the fate of a battle was decided, such men, brought in as prisoners, were ready at once to take the oath of allegiance to the victor, and transfer their battalions to his standard. But when Pyrrhus had conquered these Romans in a most bloody battle, he found to his astonishment that the prisoners would have nothing to say to him. They were Roman or Italian citizens, not mercenaries. This therefore marked a deep line of severance, deeper perhaps than that of language, in the habits of the East and the western communities.

Excellence of Roman infantry.

Roman soldiers not mercenary.

The Hellenistic sovereign who saw the importance of Rome at once was the second Ptolemy. No sooner had he learned the result of the war with Pyrrhus than he sent a polite embassy offering friendship and other friendly relations, especially of trade, to the Romans. There is still clear evidence in the honours they conferred upon him, and in the dignity of the return embassy which they sent, how deeply flattered they felt at this attention from a monarch who must naturally have regarded them as barbarians. The splendours of Alexandria must have affected the Roman envoys with astonishment. One practical result is mentioned by Pliny,*

Ptolemy's embassy to the Romans.

* "Natural History," Chap. XXXIII., 13

that it was owing to this visit the Romans learned to coin (in 269 B. C.) the silver coins, called consular *denarii.**

But this is the only serious contact of the Romans with the Hellenistic world for many years. The First Punic War occupied all their energies, and their friend Ptolemy only helped them by refusing to lend money to their great adversaries. It is worth noting these facts particularly, lest it might be imagined that Roman seriousness had anything to say to the serious aspects of Greek life in the third century B. C. There is so much that is Roman associated with Stoicism as to produce a sort of general impression that it was essentially, or at least mainly, an outcome of the Roman *gravitas*. Nothing is further from the truth. If Stoicism was not purely Hellenic, it was distinctly oriental, rather than occidental.

Greek Stoicism not influenced by Rome.

I cannot do better than begin this sketch of the inner life of the best period of Hellenism by considering its most serious and permanent feature, and therefore I shall start at once with that Stoicism which survives to the present day, one of the great legacies of the Greek mind to the world. It originated, as I have just said, in the eastern limits of Hellenism, and in contact with foreign, apparently Semitic races, which were brought into contact with Greeks. The proper home of the Greeks had nothing to say to it, beyond the accepting and following the doctrine which came from the East. Of the three great teachers, who like the three great tragic poets formed a group never again equalled, Zeno and Chrysippus came from the island of Cyprus, Cleanthes, whose extant hymn is a noble prayer, came from Assos, not very far from the site of Troy. But

The Stoic philosophy.

The founders of the Stoic school.

* *Cf.* my "Empire of the Ptolemies," page 489.

besides Cyprus, the opposite coast of Asia Minor, Lycia, and rough Pisidia, showed a strong inclination for this doctrine. Tarsus was long a well-known school of this philosophy, till it sent forth one of its most brilliant pupils, Saul, who under his changed name and faith preserved very much of the Stoic spirit, and not a little of Stoic doctrine. Zeno, the second philosopher of the name,* though probably a half-bred Greek, with Phœnician blood in his veins, enjoyed a high and deserved reputation throughout all the Hellenistic world, and especially at Athens. We hear that he earned the favour and respect of Antigonus Gonatas, the excellent king of Macedonia. He is even called the tutor of that prince, who strove to bring him from Athens to his court and who gave him a public funeral in the Ceramicus, when he was besieging Athens in the Chremonidean War (264 B. C.). Yet he was a very simple and even rude-spoken man, of great parsimony, writing in a bad dialect, using foreign words, and, still more, setting forth very strange doctrines. For in imitation of Diogenes the Cynic, who was one of his teachers, he published an ideal sketch of a "Republic," as Plato had done, but one which displayed the most trenchant and disgusting socialism. Not a single one of the sentiments of ordinary men concerning the rights of property, the rights of marriage, the avoidance of certain unions as incestuous or odious, were respected by him. All things were to be in common, and all men bound together merely by mutual affection. Indeed, the work was so offensive in many respects that later Stoics, especially at Pergamum, tried hard to prove it spurious.

Zeno.

His ideal socialistic republic.

Of his pupils Cleanthes, the most famous, was so poor

Cleanthes.

* The older Zeno (of Elea) was a subtle metaphysician, wholly disconnected from the present subject.

that he was obliged to support himself as a day labourer while he attended the lectures of Zeno. He too was without grace of diction or elegance of manners. Though coming from a truly Greek town, he seems to have affected his master's contempt for style. Yet he too had friendly relations with royalty, though he chose the very un-Stoic second Ptolemy as his friend, and sent him a pupil when invited to go himself and live at the Museum.

Chrysippus.

The systematizing of the doctrines of these and the other Stoics was done by Chrysippus, who taught in the latter half of the third century B. C. and whose literary activity—seven hundred and five separate books or tracts—was such that the saying went abroad, "No Chrysippus, no Stoa." The Stoa was the colonnade with frescoes on its inner wall in which Zeno had walked up and down while discoursing with his favourite pupils. Chrysippus is noted for having no relations with kings, and this seemed to men of that day extraordinary; but it was more consistent with a Stoic life, and with the rude manners and careless dress affected by the school.

His literary activity.

The nobility of the Stoic creed.

In what, then, consisted the extraordinary dignity and importance of the Stoic creed? Why has it lasted from that day to this as the symbol of a certain lofty type of human nature? Because it was a noble creed in itself; also because it set itself against the opposite theory of Epicurus, and fought hard for the dignity of the human soul. To the Stoic the whole world was under the control of a single guiding providence, or even with some of the school the whole world was but a manifestation of that eternal Being, in whom, as St. Paul cites their words, "we live, and move, and have our being." This is what we now call pantheism, the doctrine that there is but one immense Being, of whom

Stoic pantheism.

all the world that we see and know is but a manifestation : "The gods are his laughter, the race of mortal men his tears," says a late and obscure follower, using a huge metaphor.

But if it has been cast up to the pantheist that he destroys all moral responsibility, by destroying the distinct individuality of each man, we might answer for him by quoting the parallel and perfectly logical accusation brought against the Calvinist, that he destroyed the same moral responsibility by abolishing all human freedom. Though both arguments are logical, both are in fact false ; for no men have been more stringent in requiring moral duties from men than the Stoic pantheist and the Calvinist necessitarian. The duty of man was to learn the course and will of providence, and to shape his life accordingly. He had not been put into the world to enjoy himself, nor was pleasure, as some said, the end of life, but to forward, so far as in him lay, the course of divine order in the world. That world, the Stoic held, was not eternal, but would once and again be destroyed by fire. Nevertheless, when a man had grasped that by his reason God had made him a participator in the working out of his providence, and that there was a principle to be followed out, in always acting according to the highest laws of nature, then the Stoic sage became the forerunner of the Puritan in many curious ways. He was suddenly and sometimes even unconsciously transformed from a fool, whose every action was wanting in principle, into a state of enlightenment or grace, differing in kind from his former state.

Parallel of Stoics and Calvinists.

Stoic sage the forerunner of the Puritan.

There was no gradual approach to this salvation. As a man in the water was drowned, whether he was six feet or six inches under the surface, and gained no safety till his head was above water ; as the puppy born blind saw

as little the eighth day as the first, so the fool who thought to make some progress toward wisdom had gained nothing till the real light suddenly dawned upon him. Then he became absolutely free from vice or from misfortune, for nothing could shackle his mind, and he could leave his body like a garment in the hands of the tyrant or persecutor, if imprisonment or torture threatened him. Nay, he was rich with unfailing treasure though poor; he was perfectly satisfied, though hungry; he was a king, though in the condition of a slave. No one can therefore mistake the Stoic source of St. Paul's famous passage: "as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things."*

St. Paul and Stoicism.

He held, then, the theological doctrine of assurance in the highest degree, and as the sage was incapable of sin, so the righteousness of the fool was but dross, his virtue of no merit, his pretended knowledge utter ignorance. This gave the individual wise man a dangerous right to dictate to the world, and so to interfere in politics, though philosophers as a rule professed to withdraw from the arena of debate and chicanery, and refused to advise the turbulent democracies in which they lived. But the Stoics never refused to advise a tyrant, or single ruler, if he would take their advice; not unfrequently they joined in removing him, if he were vicious; and no conspirator was so dangerous as the man who despised death and tortures in comparison with the carrying out of his convictions.

Opposed system of Epicurus.

The opposed system of Epicurus had many points in

* 2 Corinthians VI., 8 *sq.* Our fullest account of these Stoics is in the third book of Cicero's treatise "De Finibus." We have also Diogenes Laertius on the lives of the masters.

common with this lofty system, and was in many respects also more comprehensible to the average man. Epicurus also asserted that happiness could be obtained in this life, but only by the true sage. But he started not from the conception of falling in with the ways of providence, but from the pursuit of pleasure, an instinct ingrained in every animal, which only wanted proper explanation and purification to be an adequate philosophical theory of life. For, after all, human pleasure was mostly the avoidance of pain ; the denial of violent passions in order to attain reasonable and permanent happiness.

Doctrine of pleasure.

This quietism of Epicurus was more Greek in its character, more logical too, and practical, and so within the reach of the large number of average people who could not grasp the ideal of Zeno. But it was also liable to grave misconstructions, and was denounced from the beginning as an apology for the votaries of any lawless pleasure.

Epicurean doctrine open to misconstruction.

Yet nothing could be purer and more Stoical than Epicurus's own life. He took care to show by his life and doctrine that pleasures of sense are fleeting, and, when excessive, involve great consequent pains, that our interest, when rightly understood, leads us to prefer mental to bodily pleasure—the delights of memory, of imagination, and of hope, to the tumults of passion. Thus virtue came to be identical with the longest and greatest pleasure, and duty coincident with interest. He declared also that the happiness of the wise man was independent of fortune, and even compatible with poverty and pain. He divided scanty rations among his pupils with perfect contentment during the famine of a long siege. He asserted his perfect happiness when dying slowly of an agonizing disease. Though he re-

Purity of personal life of Epicurus.

Pleasure and virtue identified.

Consistency of Epicurus.

garded the basis of friendship to be mutual profit, no one was more sentimental in his attachments.* This is indeed the most prominent feature in the long and explicit account of his life and writings left us by Diogenes Laertius. We see too in the great poem of Lucretius with what majesty this advocacy of pleasure could be stated. But in the day of its birth, the real moment of the doctrine lay in its satisfying the want of that other kind of mind which revolts from Stoicism, which desires a clear reason, and a practical one, for every action, which desires to get rid of false theory and traditional wisdom, which is sick of politics and discontented with traditional faith, and yet will not be satisfied with mere scepticism. To such tame, unpoetical natures Epicurus offered a system based directly on what they could see and feel, on the pursuit of such satisfaction as they all understood, on the putting aside of religion as a system of control or a source of fear, and supplanting it with a scientific creed, a large and distinct body of doctrine.

Lucretius the Roman Epicurean.

Attraction of Epicureanism for the scientific mind.

For this, too, is to be noted in that age, that it was not prepared for trenchant scepticism. Such a system was tried by Pyrrho of Elis, but in spite of his followers, Timon and Ænesidemus, he made no large school and left but small traces on Greek thought. The days were not yet come when the Platonists turned sceptics and brought the world round with them; it was still the age of positive teaching, of a firm belief that knowledge was attainable, of the substitution of philosophic creeds for the old religions. Second-rate people went in crowds to the second-rate successors of Plato and Aristotle,

Scepticism not yet fashionable.

* Upon this Wilamowitz ("Antigonus of Karystos," page 93, note) has well remarked, that it met one of the chief tendencies of the age. It was a day when other bonds among men had given way, when patriotism felt itself all astray, when the ties of family and of creed were loosened. Then it was that the eternal, ineradicable bond of personal sympathy and of personal attachment came into the foreground, and was embraced even by such a system as that of Epicurus, which logically seemed to contradict it.

whose schools were now well established at Athens. But Xenocrates and Theophrastus could only lead such men as Demetrius of Phaleron, or Menander, and what they taught was not life but learning. Hence we may be sure that if the lesser number frequented the Stoa or the Garden, to hear men who were strangers in birth or in education, but stranger still in their creed, these few were indeed the solid and thoughtful minds of the day.

Select following of Stoics and Epicureans.

It is not at Athens only, but in many cities of Greece—at Corinth, Elis, Colophon, Heraclea in Pontus—that this sober and serious teaching made men look away from the folly, the turmoil, the war which racked the Hellenic world for forty years, to what true and solid satisfaction was still attainable. The Greek who lost his autonomy politically regained it spiritually, and reasserted this new and greater liberty without elegance, with contempt of style, but with the sincerity of a deep conviction. The exquisite prose of Plato could not hold its place against the bald aphorisms of Epicurus or the clumsy arguments of the Cypriote Zeno. These men openly despised any quality in style except clearness, and we may be sure that in this they appealed to the sense of their public, which was tired of idle rhetoric.

Epicurean and Stoic contempt of style.

Such were the principal systems which emerged from the agitated times of the early Diadochi. As Adam Smith observed long ago, the circumstances of life, which may best be compared to the Thirty Years' War in Germany, made it quite probable that any man in any city, however peaceful he was, however neutral his city endeavoured to be, would some day suffer in an invasion, have his property plundered, his family enslaved, and himself exposed to destitution, if not to a violent and unjust death. Hence it was vital, as it was in the early

Insecurity of the period following Alexander.

Stoic and Epicurean systems meet a vital need of the age.

Christian ages, to preach a doctrine which would offer grounds to despise such ills of fortune, to stand firm under tyranny and oppression, to value life not as a priceless jewel, but as a thing only worth having under reasonable conditions. As I said before, these practical systems of life embrace all that has ever been thought out since by men (apart from divine revelation.) Setting apart as exceptional and less important the modern cynic, the conscientious sceptic, both of whom had their counterpart, as they also found their names among the schools of ancient Greece, there remain the two frames of mind, the Stoical and the Epicurean, which divide the world. Far the majority is Epicurean; far the highest and finest natures are Stoical. Whatever their dogmas, whatever their creed, these types are to be met with in every society, and will be met with so long as human nature remains the same.

Permanance of Stoic and Epicurean types.

I turn now to the inferior side of the picture, and, having endeavoured to portray the earnest and thinking classes, will say something of the idle and frivolous people, who then, as now, formed a large part of the most fashionable society in each decaying town of Greece. Our information we owe to the writers of genteel comedy, who have left us innumerable fragments though not a single complete play. We have from several of them, Philemon, Diphilus, Menander, passages of description, of reflection, of worldly wisdom, of stage folly, which give us adequate materials for a judgment, not to speak of the Latin versions, for they are little more than translations, left us by Terence. The grace and the elegance of Menander are manifest even in the Latin version, and justify the well-known panegyric: "Oh, Menander and Life, which of you has copied the other?"

The age as reflected in comedy.

Menander.

But when all has been said that ought to be, or can be, in praise of Menander's style, and when we come to inquire from him and from the New Comedy what they have to tell us about their age, the outcome is miserably small. They appear indifferent regarding all the great events of the day, all large political interests, all serious philosophy, and eager to reflect the idlest, the most trivial, and the most decayed gentility of Athens. They do not even invent new scenery, new framework, to convey their elegancies to the audience. Starting from a commonplace as old as Aristophanes, the "rape and recognition" of some respectable and therefore wholly insignificant girl, they added a few other stock characters—the young and fashionable spendthrift, the morose and stingy father, the indignant uncle, the threadbare parasite, the harpy courtesan, and by ringing the changes upon these constituents of decayed and idle Attic society produced a whole literature of graceful talk, polite immorality, selfish ethics, and shallow character. It is usual to lament the irreparable loss of the plays of Menander, but it may be doubted whether, apart from style, history would gain from a further knowledge of them. We have his sentiments, and those of Diphilus and Philemon, in hundreds of fragments; we have rude copies, too rude to imply alterations of much import, in the collection of Plautine plays, and in Terence. We may feel confident that, except by some stray allusion, the rest would have told us little more of the history, the manners, or the real life of the age.

Comedy dealt with the trivial side of Athenian life.

This generality of treatment, this absence of local colour, this avoidance of the special interests of the age—this it is which has given the New Comedy its popularity among widely different ages and people. Thus the

Reasons for Roman appreciation of the New Comedy of manners.

rude and barbarous Romans, though their society was infinitely purer, and in other respects at total variance with that implied in the New Comedy, could nevertheless understand the miser and the spendthrift, the sceptic and the superstitious, the matron and the courtesan there painted in their universal characteristics; while the plays of Aristophanes, or even the literary and philosophical criticism of the so-called Middle Comedy, were to them wholly unintelligible. Even later Greeks like Plutarch felt this, and knew that, while Aristophanes was only to be fully understood by those who understood Periclean Athens, the later comedy might be acted at Antioch or Alexandria or Seleucia on the Tigris as well as in Greece. And yet with this quasi-philosophical generality, how narrow it all was! If, instead of bitter and scurrilous allusions to great personages, which were frequent enough, and innuendos against virtue and morals, they had boldly painted Demetrius the Besieger, or the Philosopher, or Cassander's pedant brother, or the conceited artists of the day, what far deeper instruction they would have left us! Their personages are like the ingenious variations of second-rate composers upon a well-known melody, which exhibit grace and ingenuity but enrich us with no new feeling. A single national air with its inexpressible charm of distinct local colour—in fact, of originality—is worth a whole world of these variations.

Narrowness of the New Comedy.

The same criticism applies to the tract known as the "Characters of Theophrastus," a book far more praised than it deserves. In the form now extant it gives a series of portraits of various social vices—all of them forms of littleness or meanness such as are the characteristics of a shabby and idle society. Moreover, the drawing of these characters is not psychologically subtle, as

"Characters of Theophrastus" criticised.

is often asserted. The features brought out are rather those intended for stage characters than those drawn from a careful observation of real life.*

Theophrastus's book has to me the air of a treatise not copied from the New Comedy, as has been suggested, but rather composed as a handbook of characters for a young author intending to write such comedies. It was then the fashion to have recourse to philosophers, and to take their advice on most matters of life. They were supposed to know human character better than their neighbours. Menander himself, though his practical philosophy was distinctly that of his friend Epicurus, studied in this very Peripatetic school of Theophrastus, whose distinctive feature was the attention to *natural history* of every kind, from stones and plants to piety and pride. So Bolingbroke drew up on human nature a series of propositions which Pope undertook to adorn with his splendid style in the famous "Essay on Man." But in the "Characters" it is the nature of man as shown in an idle and decaying provincial society—the passions and pursuits of people with no public spirit or interests; the virtues are omitted, even the stronger vices, and all the changes rung upon the foibles and vulgarities of every-day life.

Theophrastus's book perhaps a handbook for writers of comedies.

This tedious itching to describe types equally infects the fragments of a tour in Greece left us under the name of Dicæarchus. The writer not only professes to give a distinct character to the inhabitants of each town he names in Bœotia, but even draws distinctions of this kind between the people of Attica and the Athenians.

Dicæarchus's description of types.

* How far the fourth book of Aristotle's "Ethics" may have been intended to give sketches of real life is not easy to say. The famous portrait of the "great-souled man" seems to me more of a stage character than anything else. "His voice must be deep, and his step slow" seems to me very like a theatrical suggestion. But so large and controversial a question must not be raised here.

Such refinements might be serviceable for a stage bound by the shackles of tradition. In a would-be observer of real life it leads us to doubt his accuracy in cases where a real distinction existed.

Greek comedy reflected by Plautus and Terence.

Through the troubled medium of Plautus, as well as through the more colourless Terence, we can perfectly well recover what types of life were represented on the Attic stage. Any personal allusions, indeed, which would have told us some of the history of political feeling, are left out. Perhaps, the plays which had a little more than the slightest local colour were not translated by the Latin copyists, who could not postulate in their audience any knowledge of eastern history. But all the personages, the scenes, the manners of the *comœdia palliata* of the Romans were Attic. If then we were to believe these elaborate studies of manners in Alexander's and his successors' days, the life of youth consisted in drinking, in squandering money, nay even in committing the worst kind of felony without the punishment of much remorse. The young man who is strictly brought up has to stay in the country and help to mind the farm. But how complete and oppressive an exile this was considered appears from a curious comparison in the tourist just cited (Chapter IV.): "To sum up, *as far as the rest of cities surpass the country for the pleasure and the right use of life*, so far again does Athens exceed them."

Typical characters in the New Comedy.

Accordingly the sympathy of the audience is warmly enlisted for the oppressed youth who escapes by stratagem from his watchful father and comes to spend a night of riot in the city. He does this too with the connivance of elders, and through the machinations of a "faithful" slave. For old men are divided into two opposed classes. The one is thrifty, morose, hard, censorious; the other indulgent, generous, lax in morals. If two

old men appear in a play they are generally brothers, and generally opposed in this way. The mothers of the house are either imperious heiresses, who lead their weak and sneaking husbands no pleasant life, or more respectable ciphers, the mothers of girls who innocently fall into the most serious mischief, and are only saved from ruin by what an Irish judge called "the fortuitous interference of providence." If the attending of night festivals was (as the stock incident of these plays implies) so disastrous to the character of respectable girls, one is at a loss to know how any Attic father or mother should have allowed it. We may therefore fairly assume that this theatrical commonplace, though not unheard of, was almost as rare in real life as it is now in connection with religious night services. It is certainly no mirror of ordinary Greek life.

Stock plots of the New Comedy.

I wish I could affirm that the frequent stage cases of exposed children, especially girls, brought up by the worst kind of slave-dealers, were equally rare in real life. But with the increase of both wealth and poverty in these stormy days, when the requirements of genteel life were greater, and the means of meeting them not forthcoming, the exposing of female infants may have been one of the causes contributing to the alarming decrease of population in the next century. For though it may have been so far humanely contrived that the infant seldom perished, those who saved it from death were not likely to do so for the purpose of hereafter making it the mother of a family. Still there is one circumstance about this matter of exposure which makes me suspect its frequency. In all the plays and fragments we have I cannot remember a case occurring *during the action of the play.* There is no case, for example of the finding of such a child, when exposed

Exposure of infants.

Probably not as frequent as it would seem from comedy.

by its desolate and ruined young mother, leading to its recognition by the peccant father, and its consequent rehabilitation. There is no lamentation that when a child is born it will have to be exposed. All the cases of exposure mentioned are in the past, and happened far away. Have we then before us merely another fiction of the stage?

Adherence to fixed types in comedy.

So strict was the adherence of all Greek art, even the best and greatest, to fixed models, that if one great master sanctioned this device we may be certain to find hundreds of direct imitations, and so the pedants of after days are led away to state as natural, or as ordinary, what is really the invention of a single brain. In all our social inferences from Greek literature caution on this point is of capital importance. Thus every heiress in the plays is imperious, disagreeable, disgusting to her husband, often indeed only because she will not tolerate his immoralities. Of course there were at Athens and throughout Greece plenty of amiable heiresses—thousands who had not bowed the knee to Mammon. If we believe the New Comedy there were none. So also there is no colour in any profession save one. The skippers who came into port from foreign parts are all the same. The soldiers are all the same—cowards, braggarts, and defeated in love. Menander declared by the mouth of one of his characters that not even the gods, if they tried, could produce a polished soldier. Yet in that day, when the profession was a leading one of Greece, there must have been plenty of soldiers of fortune similar in type to Xenophon, and far more cultivated by travel and experience than their Attic critics.

Narrow Atticism in Menander's period.

But the use of an un-Attic form, or a local name not recognized at Athens, would be enough in Menander's day to set them down as boors.

Far more disagreeable than these portraits in the New Comedy are the many pictures of immoral old age, of fathers indulging their sons in vice, and conniving at it, nay worse, taking part in it in the presence of their sons. The apologies of the *Grex* at the end of the play are exhibitions of the very worst Epicureanism "of the stage," and we may indeed wonder how the solid Romans of the Second Punic War, a great and sound society, could have tolerated such pictures of vice as would have been thought outrageous if occurring at Rome. How could the Fabii, the Aurelii, the Marcelli of that day endure that their children should be made intimate with the society of courtesans, as a part of elegance and culture? It would be irrelevant to discuss this question. Suffice it to say that we now tolerate in bookshops and even on our tables French novels which, if printed in English, would be subject to prosecution by the law, and which no respectable bookseller would venture to advertise. Recently the English people even fêted in London one of the worst authors in infamous literature. In some such way the Romans may have tolerated in the *comœdia palliata* things which would have been revolting to them if represented as Italian.

Immorality of the New Comedy.

Modern parallel of French fiction.

What we have said concerning the evidence of comedy about the age of the first Diadochi amounts to this: Menander and his successors—they lasted barely two generations—printed in a few stereotypes a small and very worthless society at Athens. There was no doubt a similar set of people at Corinth, at Thebes, possibly even in the city of Lycurgus. These people, idle, for the most part rich, and in good society, spent their earlier years in debauchery, and their later in sentimental reflections and regrets. They had no serious object in life, and regarded the complications of a love affair as more inter-

Triviality and frivolity of Athenian society.

esting than the rise and fall of kingdoms or the gain and loss of a nation's liberty. They were like the people of our day who spend all their time reading novels from the libraries, and who can tolerate these eternal variations in twaddle not only without disgust but with interest. They were surrounded with slaves, on the whole more intelligent and interesting, for in the first place slaves were bound to exercise their brains, and in the second they had a great object—liberty—to give them a keen pursuit in life. The relations of the sexes in this set or portion of society were bad, owing to the want of education in the women and the want of earnestness in the men. As a natural consequence a class was found, apart from household slaves, who took advantage of these defects, and, bringing culture to fascinate unprincipled men, established relations which brought estrangements, if not ruin, into the home life of the day.

Want of education and earnestness in men and women.

Such then being the society which we find depicted at Athens, and by implication throughout Greece—for the scenes of the New Comedy by no means confine themselves to Attica—what notion can we frame of the principal cities, in which the general features already described may have been modified by circumstances, and what were the circumstances? The most brilliant and populous cities in the Hellenistic world were at that time not the old historic towns of Greece or Asia Minor, but great new creations, which tried hard to obtain for themselves the stamp of antiquity, and invented many legends of mythical founders, but still were perfectly known to be upstart foundations. Even in many cases where old cities like Smyrna and Ephesus revived, it was from the gathering of the surrounding villages, into which they had been scattered by the Persians, of a population no longer really the inheritors of the old fame

Rise of new cities and spread of city life.

and tradition of these cities. But now city life became the fashion. Everywhere the Hellenistic kings undertook to found them—first of all their respective capitals, then other foundations to which the neighbouring people came spontaneously, or were forced to come, to form a new centre. In many cases two or more decaying cities were induced or compelled to amalgamate by Antigonus, or Lysimachus, or Seleucus, as we know from inscriptions, and from the testimony of Strabo.

Cos and Rhodes.

Of the older cities, Cos and Rhodes were the most prominent. The latter was not very ancient, but it had been founded (in 408 B. C.) by three very ancient neighbouring cities, so that it might fairly claim the respectability of antiquity. But in the behaviour of its citizens and the prudence of its government it proved that these claims were founded upon solid reasons. For both here and at Cos we seem to find a life far more orderly and respectable than at Alexandria or at Antioch. These latter, together with Pergamum, were the most notable of the new foundations, because they were all capitals, and the seats of courts and royalty. Hence we know a little—very little—about them, whereas such great cities as Apamea, Laodicea, and Seleucia on the Tigris are now no more than a name.

Cos under the patronage of the Ptolemies.

Let us take up Cos and Rhodes first. The smaller island is known to us as the place of retirement and rest for people wearied with the excitements and the turmoil of Alexandria. It was a favourite place for the Ptolemies to send their children to be brought up in a quiet and wholesome society, of pure blood and of good manners. The second Ptolemy was actually born there, and consequently the island enjoyed his liberal favours. But not only were princes glad to find this harbour of refuge for their growing infants and for themselves, but literary

men also retired there, and formed a literary society of which we have a most charming sketch in the seventh idyll of Theocritus. There the weary pedants of the Museum appear as shepherds or vine-dressers, enjoying a country feast and singing rural strains of love and of wine. The modern public was long deceived by this charming idyll, and took as literal fact what was evidently a mere convention of the moment. As well might Marie Antoinette and her dairy at the Trianon have been taken for genuine dairy work. Both were the revolt of a human nature with sound instincts against the excessive ceremony, etiquette, artificiality, pomposity, of an overwrought and unnatural society. Here then we find, perhaps for the first time in Greek life, a growing distaste for town life, and consequent love of the country with its simpler tastes and homelier pursuits. To us this is natural enough, for the Anglo-Saxon race has always been a sporting race, and field sports postulate country life. But the old Greeks were essentially townsmen, regarding the city or polity as the only civilized place of living, and consequently the dweller in the country was regarded as rustic, pagan, boorish, and generally uncultivated. "How shall he become wise that holdeth the plough, that glorieth in the shaft of the goad; that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose discourse is of the stock of bulls? They shall not be sought for in the council of the people, and in the assembly they shall not mount on high, neither shall they declare instruction and judgment, and where parables are they shall not be found." These are the words of a Jew deeply influenced with Hellenism, and with the same contempt as the old Greeks had for country pursuits.*

Unreality of Theocritus.

Greek distaste for country life.

Jewish parallel.

* Ecclesiasticus xxxix. 24, 89. I have omitted the verses which include the skilled mechanic in this town class of useful but not honourable members of society.

It was in direct contrast to all this that Theocritus made his mark and his permanent place in the world of letters, by deserting Alexandria and its streets for the glades and upland pastures of Sicily, and in spirit at least returning to the free life of the shepherd and the neat herd, revelling in "the divine leisure" of the fields, the myriad depth of the woods, "the moan of doves in immemorial elms, and murmuring of innumerable bees." All the "properties" of the mediæval Arcadia, with its coy nymphs and piping shepherds, its murmuring streams and complaining nightingales, were here introduced into poetry, and have ever since been the stock in trade of bards who had little inspiration from reality, and who sought to compensate with artificial graces for the lack of inspiration. Theocritus was, however, too good an artist to impose childish innocence upon his swains; the human passions, perhaps rather the animal passions, are strong in them, and make his idylls far more realistic than those of his mediæval followers. I fancy the poet made most of his studies of this rural life at Cos or in the island of Rhodes; there is no evidence that he lived in Sicily, any more than that his greatest imitator, the Neapolitan Sannazaro, ever went to Arcadia.* For the whole of his work is artificial, unreal, though so artistic that it has imposed upon the world as the effusion of a pastoral heart.

Reaction in Theocritus.

Artificiality of Theocritus.

It is well to insist upon this feature in the Hellenistic poetry of this century, when we come to consider the recent discovery which gives us sketches of the town life at Cos, professedly during the poet's own life and observation. The "Mimiambics" of Herondas, a new

"Mimiambics" of Herondas.

* On this Sannazaro and his Arcadia, see what I have said in the chapter on Arcadia in my "Rambles and Studies in Greece."

treasure of the British Museum, professes to give us life-pictures, especially of the daily walk and talk of women of the middle class, their efforts at educating unruly boys, their love of bargaining in shops and trying on new clothes, their petty jealousies and intrigues, not to speak of their actual vices. If these were indeed the general features of female life at Cos, we might well wonder that any one should choose it as a resort for literary leisure, still less for the safe education of children. For all the life depicted is base and vulgar; where there is not degrading vice there is meanness of motive, provinciality of language; there is hardly a redeeming feature in the moral picture that the poet presents to us. But here again it is only the unwary pedant who will be deceived. These are not pictures of actual life at Cos, but also borrowed from Sicily, and describing not the fair country, but the back streets of Syracuse. The prose "mimes" of Sophron of Syracuse had long been celebrated for their sketches of low life in dramatic form, so celebrated as to have been the constant study of Plato when composing his dialogues. A whole book of these sketches was devoted to the ways and works of women. It is more than probable that this book was Herondas's model, and that he put into verse, and dressed up as recent and actual, what was really two centuries old, and what belonged to a society long past in a remote part of the Hellenic world. Every original sketch of any society has general features which will fit any age. It is the reproduction of these which give to Herondas as well as to Theocritus that illusive appearance of actuality which is more or less persuasive according to the genius of the artist.

Base and vulgar life depicted by Herondas.

Pictures of life at Syracuse rather than Cos.

Perhaps imitated from the "mimes" of Sophron.

On no account, therefore, should we judge the society of Cos from these studies. The island has been ex-

amined recently by Mr. Paton, in the hope of finding inscriptions which would be far more trustworthy evidence. But his hopes have been in the main disappointed. Except some corroborations of the Ptolemaic patronage, and votive inscriptions set up by their officers, the search for new material has been sadly unfruitful. Let us turn to Rhodes.

Rhodes.

This commonwealth has taken the place of Athens in the eastern Levant. What Athens had done a hundred and fifty years before, in clearing the seas of pirates and keeping guardships upon the water thoroughfares, in combining the coasts and islands into a confederacy for the purpose of mutual help and advantage, was now being done by Rhodes. But there is this important difference, that the government of Rhodes never became a democracy in the Greek sense, where every free citizen could vote, but always remained in the hands of a rich aristocracy of merchants, who satisfied the poor with bread, not with power, and by attending to their material welfare saved them from becoming the political mischief which the mob had shown itself in so many other free cities. Hence we never hear of those public follies being committed at Rhodes which disgrace the later history of Athens, and which, even in better days, were the main cause of her downfall. The prudent aristocracy of Rhodes was indeed guilty of some grave indiscretions. The commercial ruin of their city, which had been designed and prepared by Roman speculators, was brought on after the battle of Pydna by their falling into a very simple trap. They were advised by a Roman noble who was in the "Tammany ring" of the time to offer their mediation between Rome and Macedon. For centuries they had been acting as mediators all over the Hellenistic world; their good offices had

Government of Rhodes aristocratic.

Cause of Roman indignation against Rhodes.

been gratefully accepted. But when the Roman Republic had become a proud empire, dictating to the East, the offer of mediation from a merchant city was met with a howl of indignation, got up by the money people, who desired a conflict, and who almost produced a declaration of war against Rhodes at Rome. By declaring Delos a free port the financial ruin of the city was however sufficiently accomplished. And this would certainly have been brought about, whether Rhodes had made a diplomatic mistake or not. She was probably led into it by deliberate lies on the part of Romans, who seemed responsible persons, and who pretended that they gave the advice suggested by the friends of Rhodes at Rome.

Financial ruin of Rhodes.

In earlier days Rhodes was remarkable for avoiding all hasty legislation, still more for avoiding all declaration of revenge or personal dislike toward her enemies. Here the caution of merchant princes shows itself in contrast to the passions of a mob. When besieged and brought to the greatest straits by Demetrius Poliorcetes, the Rhodians would not submit to the proposal of some angry citizen to pull down and destroy the statues erected in former years by the grateful state to this king and to his father. Very probably they intended to show by this example how different they were from an excitable mob such as that of Athens, which presently overthrew and destroyed all the statues of the other Demetrius, who had been for ten years the successful ruler of Athens. They showed it again, in a war undertaken with Byzantium for the sake of keeping the Bosphorus open to Greek trading ships without paying toll to that city. The Byzantine people had been blackmailed by their inland neighbours, the Thracians, and the city had begged aid from the Greek world.

Caution and diplomacy of the Rhodians.

When refused, they began to stop ships and levy toll. To this strong objections were made, and a war was begun by the Rhodians. But no sooner had they got the advantage than they made peace without demanding any indemnity, without humiliating their adversaries; they merely demanded that the old rule should be resumed, and that ships should pass free through the Bosphorus.

Magnanimity of the Rhodians.

It was owing to this reasonable and honourable way of conducting their trading supremacy that all the world was ready to contribute great sums when Rhodes was nearly destroyed by an earthquake, about 225 B. C. The list of gifts from kings and from free cities is given by Polybius, who wonders over the generosity of that day, as compared with his own, only half a century later. But he omits to tell us what we can infer from other evidence, that these gifts were no mere generosity, but a practical way of averting the impending financial crisis, which the ruin of the Rhodian banks would entail upon all the civilized world.

Importance of Rhodes in the financial world.

Rhodes was also a favourite place of education, not only for young business men, but for young orators and men of letters. The schools were admirable; there was good and steady society; in art we know that there was a famous Rhodian school, marked with the characteristics we should expect—moderation and strictness of design, at least in comparison with the luxurious and sensational schools of Asia Minor. The same thing was said of the rhetoric taught there. They professed to derive their style from the famous Æschines, the adversary of Demosthenes, who went thither in exile. In any case the Rhodian style is contrasted with the Asianic, of which Hegesias was the teacher, by its chastity and adherence to older and stricter models.

Education at Rhodes.

"Rhodian" style in rhetoric.

Cos, therefore, this city, and perhaps Tarsus, shared with Athens the reputation of being what we might call university towns, whither it was safe to send young men to prosecute their studies.

Antioch and Alexandria.

Far different were the two great capitals of the eastern Hellenistic world, Antioch and Alexandria. The circumstances of the foundation of each were not very dissimilar, but in every other respect, except that they were both new and both capitals, there are strong contrasts. Alexandria was situated on flat sandbanks by the sea, and fed with water by canals from the Nile; Antioch was in the narrow valley of the Orontes, between rugged mountains and the rushing river, at least twelve miles from the sea. Alexandria had no other great city near it; Antioch was one of four, Seleucia (its port), Apamea, and Laodicea, which were all great and populous, and essentially Greek cities. Alexandria had only one other insignificant Greek city, Naucratis, within reach of it, and in all Egypt only one other far away, Ptolemais in the upper country: Antioch had around it in Syria and Cœle-Syria many Græco-Macedonian settlements with privileged inhabitants. Alexandria was founded once for all by the great conqueror himself; Antioch was built by Seleucus from the débris of the earlier Antigoneia, which his rival had founded a few miles further up the river. But both were great cities, with the characteristics of such cities containing a mixed population. Both played an important part hereafter in the history and development of Christianity.

The two cities compared.

History of Antioch.

All these reasons would make a comparison of them highly interesting, but bad as is our knowledge of Alexandria, that of early Antioch is still worse. We only know of its fair suburb called Daphne, where the ample

supply of mountain springs made a shady and cool resort for the population; we know that Macedonians, Jews, Greeks, and native Syrians formed a population scattered through four distinct quarters, added by the Seleucid kings according as the population outgrew the older bounds. Twice it was occupied by Ptolemies who invaded the country; in neither case after a battle or siege, but with the consent of a large part of the population. It is but the other day that I recovered a fragment of a narrative which tells how the troops and sailors of the third Ptolemy were received with demonstrations of joy by the populace.* Seleucia at the mouth of the Orontes was held by the Egyptians as a fortress in the enemy's country for more than twenty years. We know from Josephus that the seventh Ptolemy was crowned there just a century later, and an extant coin, representing him as king of Syria, proves the accuracy of the historian.

Recovery of a fragment of its history.

Alexandria never submitted to this indignity (though Antiochus Epiphanes was stopped at its very gates by the Romans) till the days of its last king, Auletes, who was "restored" by the Romans with great slaughter, and then in the campaign of Julius Cæsar, who was practically a prisoner there with his little army for many months, and well-nigh concluded his career in its harbour.

But unfortunately no great creation of the Macedonian Greeks has left such slight traces of its existence as Antioch. Known and inhabited as a village (Antakia) in the days of the crusades, it has hitherto tempted no explorer to search for the remains of its centuries of splendour. The reason is clear enough. Founded in a

Slight traces of Antioch remaining.

* *Cf.* the *Petrie Papyri*, Vol. II., No. XLV., for this curious text, which has given rise to many essays and commentaries in Germany since its discovery.

district liable to frequent earthquakes, Antioch suffered in the early centuries of our era such a series of devastations from this dreadful disturbance that it became uninhabitable. Probably great masses of rock have been tumbled from above down upon its palaces, colonnades, and streets. The remains of the Seleucids may in many cases be hidden under hopeless accumulations of natural ruin, which is not like the ruins of mere human habitations, capable of being probed or removed by the spade.* But these things would not have hindered our knowing something about this great and splendid city, the capital of a province far more Greek than any part of Egypt, if any native writer or any early description had survived. It is only from Strabo, and then from Dio and from John Chrysostom that something of the life of the Antiochenes survives. We can therefore say no more of it in this place than to repeat the important fact that the Hellenic civilization, of which the golden epoch had been confined to Greece and the coast of Asia Minor, had now found for itself this new and splendid centre in Syria, from whence it could influence not only Cœle-Syria and Palestine, but the inner country as far as the Euphrates and Tigris. The Seleucid kings very justly chose for their capital a site not beyond the reach of Greek culture; thus they spread its influence far away across deserts, rivers, and mountains, to the confines of India.

Antioch a centre of Hellenic civilization.

Not less splendid and far more celebrated in Hellenistic history is Alexandria, which took up the torch of learning from decaying Greece, and did all that could be done to perpetuate, to propagate, to promote Greek

Alexandria a centre of Greek literature and science.

*The history of Antioch, with all the troubles from riots, angry emperors, Saracens, Turks, and earthquakes, is to be found in a well-known Latin essay of K. O. Müller, published in the fifth volume of his collected essays on archæology. There is an insufficient article in the great new German encyclopædia of Pauly-Wissowa.

literature and science. The Ptolemies who ruled at Alexandria never indeed succeeded in Hellenizing Egypt, as the Seleucids had Hellenized Syria, but they did not choose to do so. With practical sense they must have seen that the tough though pliant Egyptian character would never take this new training. They refrained from building many Greek towns in Egypt. But they determined to concentrate all their energies upon the capital, so that in Alexandria might be found every kind and form of Greek product in art, literature, and science. It is held universally that Alexandria was designed by Alexander for a commercial city, because, I suppose, it turned out admirably suited for that purpose. I have endeavoured to show elsewhere that the neighbourhood of the older Naucratis had something to say to his decision.* Possibly, however, he may have intended it as a provisional and very safe capital, where he could gather stores and train the recruits necessary for his conquest of the remaining Persian Empire. The conqueror's views probably expanded by degrees.

The Hellenization of Alexandria by the Ptolemies.

But if as a commercial site Alexandria was unrivalled, we cannot say much for its natural beauty. Sandhills without wooding, without cliffs, and a tideless sea, with no far mountains or islands in sight—what could be more dreary to those who had been accustomed to the enchanting views from the Greek and Asiatic coast towns? We know that the Greeks of classical days said little about the picturesque. Nevertheless its unconscious effect upon their poetry and other forms of art is clearly discernible, and perhaps not a little of the unpicturesqueness of Alexandrian culture is due to the absence of this vague yet powerful influence. The grandeur of solemn mountains, the mystery of deep for-

Lack of natural beauty in the site of Alexandria.

* *Cf.* my "Empire of the Ptolemies," Chap. I.

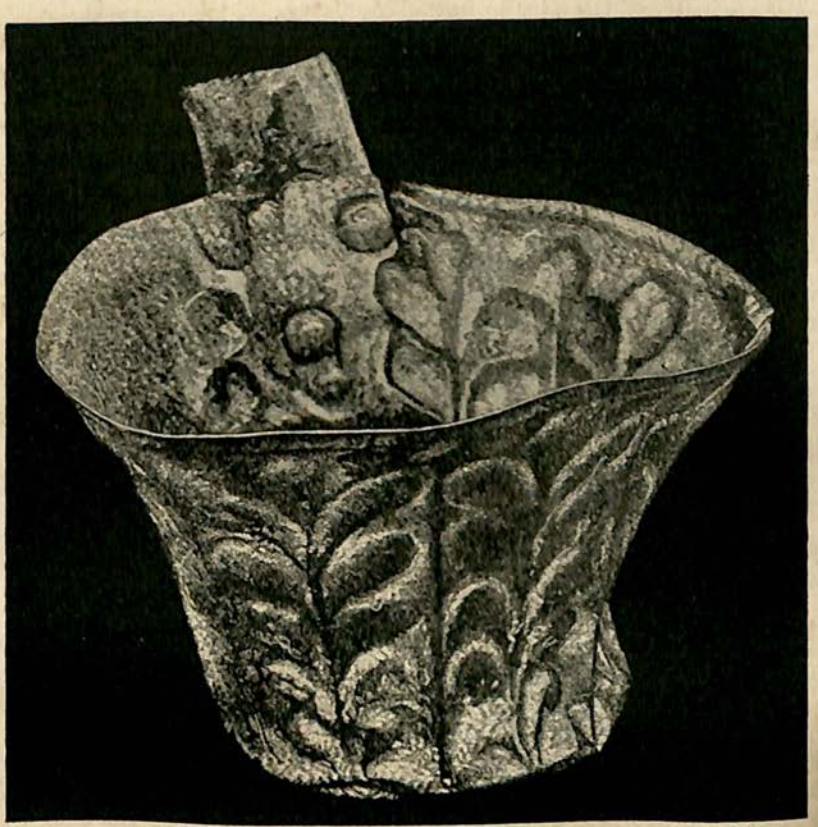
ests, the sweet homeliness of babbling streams, the scent of deep meadows and fragrant shrubs, all this was familiar even to the city people of Hellenic days. For their towns were small, and all of them surrounded by scenes of natural beauty. But the din and the dust of the new capital, reaching over an extent as great as modern Paris, were only relieved within by a few town-parks or gymnasia, and without by fashionable bathing suburbs, where the luxuries of city life replaced the sweets of nature; and if there were retirement and leisure within the university, it was eminently the retirement among books—the natural home for pedants and grammarians.

Literature of the Alexandrian period.

It would require a separate volume to give any account of the vast body of literature which has reached us from this epoch. Literature in the pure sense of model writing it is not; but literature in the sense of scientific teaching, archæological teaching, historical and philological inquiry, in the highest sense. It is never to be forgotten that the learned men of the great library and of the Museum (as the great College of Alexandria was called) preserved and purified the texts of the great classics, sorted the wheat from the chaff, and appended those critical marks and explanatory notes which have given us almost all the knowledge we possess of the literary history of earlier Greece. Thus, for example, Aristophanes would be well-nigh unintelligible were it not for the *scholia* which come from the Alexandrian critics, and which we find copied in the margins of our best mediæval manuscripts. All our scientific knowledge of Homer dates from the discovery, late in the last century, of an eleventh-century copy at Venice, furnished with the critical marks and notes of Aristarchus. These men also left us commentaries upon their own produc

Importance of Alexandrian critics.

Homeric criticism.



GOLD CUP FROM MYCENÆ. (See page 30.)
From Schuchhardt's "Schliemann," page 239.

tions. We have the "Argonautics" of Apollonius Rhodius and the "Cassandra" of Lycophron so explained, and if either of them were worth ranking among the classics, we should find these notes of the highest value. But the learned world has come to a tacit agreement that of all the Alexandrian books surviving none is to have the honour of forming modern taste except the "Idylls" of Theocritus. His pastorals have been so long and so constantly imitated, ever since Virgil's day, that he is as much a household name among literary men as any of his predecessors. The great scientific works, the mathematics, astronomy, geography of Hipparchus, Euclid, Eratosthenes, Apollonius, have been absorbed into the more recent systems, not without the permanent recognition and gratitude of the learned. Euclid indeed still holds his place in all English mathematical teaching as the unapproachable introduction to strict scientific thinking. Whether he should now be replaced by some modern text-book or not, there is no doubt that in *logic* he will never be surpassed, and it is of the logic of thinking that his "Elements" will ever remain a perfect specimen. If the Alexandrian Greeks had left us nothing else, would not the modern scientific world owe them a permanent debt of gratitude? nor is it a doubtful sign of greatness to have been the plague and the detestation of myriads of schoolboys for countless generations.

The most noteworthy book of this age the "Idylls" of Theocritus.

The "Elements" of Euclid.

Alexandria the real centre of Hellenism.

The greatness of this city, the splendour of its court, the wealth of its sovereigns, made it in this century the real centre of Hellenism to outside nations. It was not from Athens with all its ancient prestige, but from Alexandria that the Romans learned their civilization. We can still trace the spread of Greek arts and comforts from the first port which was opened by the Romans to

Alexandrian ships, the port of Puteoli (Pozzuoli) close within the entrance of the Bay of Naples. The old Greek traditions of that country, which had been crushed by the conquests of Samnites and Romans, revived again under the influence of the many Greeks who worked this Alexandrian trade. Presently Baiæ, Neapolis, Herculaneum, Pompeii, all became fashionable settlements for Romans, owing to the Greek flavour of the population, and the facility of obtaining from Alexandria the arts and crafts which gave comfort and refinement to private life. Recent researches have shown that all the elegant designs in Roman houses, all those conventional ornaments which were copied from the ruins of Roman palaces by the masters of the Renaissance, all the graceful house decoration which we have found beneath the ashes at Pompeii, are copied directly from Alexandria. We have even specimens of purely Egyptian ornament, crocodiles, hippopotami, and papyrus plants, utilized by these Romans through the intermediation of the Alexandrians.

Trade of Alexandria.

Influence of Alexandrian art at Rome.

But though the kingdom of Egypt thus furnished a home and a new centre for Greek art, Greek learning, Greek letters, it was no home for Greek politics, or the special side of literature developed by politics. There was no eloquence at Alexandria, doubtless because the Ptolemies knew that to let the Greeks lash themselves with their periods and heat themselves with their metaphors would be dangerous to the court and the public order. The city population was inflammable enough; riots were both frequent and bloody; had there been a school of orators to promote them, the consequences might indeed have been disastrous. Hence there were not even Hellenic rights granted to the population. They had no *Boule* or *demos*, no council or assembly of

Greek politics found no home at Alexandria.

citizens, which was the distinctive feature of every free Greek city. Magistrates appointed by the crown, with administrative powers of a semi-military kind, kept the city in order. There was a garrison of household troops, so-called Macedonians, with special privileges, the prototype of the prætorian guards at Rome. Indeed, many of the city arrangements at Alexandria were copied by the emperor Augustus, when he was organizing his power.

Pergamum.

But he may also have taken some ideas from another very interesting model, which is most characteristic of the age now under consideration—I mean the city and royalty of Pergamum. This interesting kingdom, which lasted from the beginning of the third century to the time when it was bequeathed to, and absorbed by, the Roman people during the days of the Gracchi, has many characteristic features, which were not known by us till the results of the recent excavations by the Germans were made known. The fort had been a treasure fort, held for Lysimachus by the founder of the dynasty, then retained after his death and that of Seleucus, and held against Antiochus, the new king of Syria (281 B. C.), whose difficulties were so great that he was compelled to permit the revolt. We know now that Philetærus even lent money from his treasure to the neighbouring Greek cities to purchase their freedom from Antiochus.

Its history.

The kingdom of the Attalids.

Thus arose the kingdom of Attalids, ruled by relations of the founder, seldom inheriting in the direct line, but nevertheless showing the strongest family affections, and avoiding those domestic conflicts which were the ruin of both the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties. The political rôle of the Attalids was to protect the liberties of the surrounding cities not only from Syria, but from the new kingdoms of Bithynia and Cappadocia, which threatened to absorb them. But, above all, these kings,

Eumenes I., Attalus I., Eumenes II., Attalus II., earned great glory and the gratitude of all the Greeks by resisting the inroads of the pestilent Galatians, who had made for themselves a robber state in the interior of Asia Minor, and were now the scourge and terror of all their neighbours.

The Attalids resist the inroads of the Galatians.

To check and defeat these marauders was the greatest service possible to Hellenism, and this it was which made Pergamum the centre of civilization and of art for all Asia Minor. The kings celebrated their victories over the Gauls by splendid works of art, and their school of sculpture has survived not only in the splendid remains of the high altar, recently brought to the Museum of Berlin, but in those famous statues of dying Gauls, which were mistaken by our fathers for statues of gladiators. There was one of a Galatian who had just killed his wife, her body has fallen beside him, and who is thrusting his sword into his own heart, in the Villa Ludovisi (now destroyed); there is another of the so-called gladiator, made famous by Byron's lines, which shows us plainly how the triumph of the Attalids and the despair of the barbarians were represented in Pergamene art. These examples and the large remains of the groups of reliefs, which adorned the sides of the great altar, have afforded recent historians of Greek art one of their most attractive chapters. It is remarkable, however, that though these kings gathered a great library, in imitation of that at Alexandria, and though they had a school of Homeric critics, and though they favored the great Stoic doctrine and patronized its masters, the contribution of Pergamum to Greek literature amounts to nothing.*

Pergamum the centre of civilization for Asia Minor.

Pergamene art.

Pergamum made no important contribution to Greek literature.

* *Cf.* the discussion of the critical work of Crates and his school in Susemil's book on "Alexandrian Literature," II., page 1 *sqq.*

Political constitution of Pergamum.

What the inscriptions have taught us concerning the political constitution of the state is far more instructive. Pergamum appears to have had the regular constitution of a Greek city, and all the extant decrees are passed by the council and *demos*. The kings appear in fact outside the constitution, except that they nominate officers called *strategi*, and these are mentioned as proposing the decrees passed by the people. There are also frequent decrees voting thanks, divine honours, etc., to the kings as benefactors of the state, as if their actual control of it was studiously ignored. Nevertheless these kings had all the state and appointments of other Hellenistic kings; they had heroic honours and altars erected to them during their lives; they were deified after their death; in all the discussions with the Romans and other foreign powers there is no mention of the *demos* of Pergamum, but only of the king.

Its kings.

These curious facts point to a compromise between the new Hellenistic and the old Hellenic ideas of city government, and evidently a most successful compromise. We do not hear of any struggles of the royalty with the commons. When the last king had bequeathed his rights and privileges to the Romans, we find the people ready to adopt the cause of an illegitimate pretender, who carried on for some years a dangerous war with the power of Rome. The Attalids were evidently very wealthy. Either by monopolizing the state domains of the old Persian, and then Seleucid kings, which were scattered all over Asia Minor, or by a judicious system of taxation, they amassed sufficient treasure, in addition to the original nine thousand talents held by Philetærus, to adorn their own capital with splendid temples, colonnades, altars, palaces. They even adorned Greek cities, especially Athens, with works of art and of public

Wealth of the Attalids.

comfort. The first Attalus had offered splendid groups of statues on the Acropolis. The second Eumenes had built a stoa or colonnade of which the remains are still visible. Thus they preserved their popularity in Greece, while they took care to help the Romans in their eastern wars, and received after the battle of Magnesia (190 B. C.) most of Asia Minor as a reward.

The Romans reward the Attalids.

It is quite possible that the peculiar constitution constructed by Augustus for his own empire at Rome owed some of its characteristic features to Pergamum, as well as to Alexandria. If the police and administration of the city show traces of the latter, surely the curious compromise of empire and republic, of a sovereign outside and yet controlling the state, of the mixture of nominees of the crown and those elected by the people, of that curious fear of asserting royalty while securing all its advantages, may have been borrowed by the shrewd and politic Augustus from the remarkable model, which was so successful in the second century B. C.

Resemblance of the constitution of the Roman Empire to that of Pergamum.

CHAPTER X.

GREEK CULTURE UNDER THE ROMANS.

WE have now brought Hellenic civilization down to the time when the "cloud in the West" began to overshadow it. We have seen how after the disruption o Alexander's empire, his successors and the old fre cities, amid many rivalries, many wars, many new foun dations, many destructions or amalgamations of olc ones, had nevertheless kept alive Hellenic culture. Indeed, the existence of many centres for art and literature must have been far more favourable, upon the whole, for the culture of the race and its dissemination among neighbouring races than if the whole empire had been kept under one ruler, and all its greatest products centralized in one huge capital. We knew in the case of Germany, during the earlier part of the nineteenth century, how many small courts, each promoting the arts, the learning, the refinements of life, did far more for the country than a centralized German empire will ever effect. The rivalries of Alexandria, Antioch, Pergamum, Rhodes, Athens, and many other cities gave scope for many artists, for many schools, and so maintained the varieties so characteristic to Greek culture, even after many cities of old Greece were decayed, and not likely to hold aloft the torch they had received from their ancestors. We showed reason to believe that the art of the period stood very high; what we still have from the tombs of Sidon and from the sculptures of Pergamum are of the first class. If they did not equal the

Numerous centres of art and literature kept Greek culture alive.

work of Phidias himself, they certainly equalled and even exceeded the work of many of his lesser contemporaries, nor is it aught but narrowness of mind to pin our faith to one epoch only, and refuse to admit perfection in any other. The works alluded to are the only specimens. The splendid groups known as the Laocoön and the Toro Farnese (in Naples) show a boldness of conception and daring of execution which have many features distinctly in advance of the quieter and less emotional earlier work. These groups handle marble as easily as the painter uses colours; and if we would see how such work affects a great poet, we have the famous scene in Virgil's Æneid describing the priest's death, which was doubtless inspired by this very group, then well known and already brought to Rome. But if there be those who maintain that this extremely passionate treatment in marble is travelling beyond the sculptor's sphere—a statement to which I do not subscribe—what will they say when they study the Venus of Melos (Milo) which was long believed to be of the school of Phidias, and has only of recent years been discovered to be a work not older than 150 B. C.? Here is repose, here are grace and dignity; here are all the perfections of the Golden Age found in a work of the supposed decadence. The fact is that the majority of the statues most celebrated throughout the world, and copied for all our museums, are works of the Hellenistic period, which were not wrought till after the death of Alexander.

So-called "decadence" of sculpture of Hellenistic period not borne out by extant specimens.

The Venus of Milo; lateness of its date.

I cannot but think that a false impression regarding the plastic arts has been derived from the contempt in which the polite literature of the age has been held. The great philosophies, which were its glory, are only preserved to us in fragments, and we know positively

Reasons for the theory of decadence in Hellenistic art.

that they scorned the art of composition. The excessive strictnesses and refinement of such work as that of Isocrates, or of Demosthenes, must have seemed wasted labour to men who had many weighty things to say, and thought it of little importance how they said them.

Decadence of style in the Alexandrian age did not spread to the other arts.

But in the other branches of literature (excluding of course pure science) a decadence of style cannot possibly be denied. The people of this age essayed all kinds of composition; they believed themselves as great as their predecessors, if not greater; yet in two small departments only, that of bucolic poetry and in the epigram, have they left us work worthy of their great traditions. Those who have felt this inferiority of style in the third and second centuries B. C. are very apt to imagine that it was paralleled in other arts, and that the men who wrote badly also carved and built and painted badly. Such was not the case. If we but saw the decorations of a Hellenistic palace, or the architecture of a Hellenistic city, I feel sure that we should reverse our judgments.

The critical school of Alexandria dies out in the reign of Ptolemy VII.

We have already considered the poetry of Alexandria, and know how both this and the great critical school appear to die out in the time of the seventh Ptolemy. When the great Scipio Æmilianus went to visit Egypt in company with Panætius, he may still have found there some eminent scientific men, but Aristarchus, the king of critics and the last of his race, was in exile, and perhaps even already dead.

But in Greece itself we have one great figure, the man who lived to see the growth of the Roman Republic, the conquest of Macedonia, the conquest of Greece, and its final subjection to Rome. He stood between the living and the dead, but the plague was not stayed.

Polybius.

This unique figure is the historian Polybius, to whom

we owe, even in his shattered and lacerated remains, almost all our knowledge of this momentous time. There was no man better suited by his circumstances to be the mirror of the age; he had taken part in wars, in embassies, in debates; he had seen the courts of Alexandria, of Pergamum, probably of Macedonia, and his long internment in Italy was changed by good fortune into a residence in the greatest noble house in Rome, where he learned to know and to appreciate the real strength and purity of the best Roman life.

His close association with the life of the Roman nobility.

From him then we can learn the aspects of Hellenism, as they appeared to him. He was born of the better classes, and always took the aristocratic side; hence, though he advocated all through his life the liberty of the Greeks, he shows no real horror for tyrants as such, and a very great respect for kings. He was quite accustomed to royal courts as the home of good manners, and often notices with serious displeasure breaches of etiquette. Courtiers were then what they are now, false, smiling, obsequious people, and yet because they exercise their vices for the pleasure of royalty, they are excused, and even applauded by society. But Polybius could criticise even the manners of kings. He tells us that the two great diplomatic qualities in a sovereign are urbanity and secrecy. He must be courteous and keep his temper under all circumstances: he must never betray his confidants under any. He turns aside specially to commend a very wicked man, King Philip V. of Macedon, for having carefully burnt all compromising papers in his possession after his defeat at Cynoscephalæ. His son Perseus, a boorish and miserly person, who possessed no kingly instincts, neglected to do so after the battle of Pydna, and brought thereby great miseries upon the Greeks. For in that seething com-

His aristocratic sympathies.

His ideal of a king.

plex of states full of patriots, full of traitors, full of diplomacy, full of promises unfulfilled, there was correspondence enough to ruin half the world.

Polybius plays an important part in Greek politics.

Within Peloponnesus, where Polybius had his home, he was a strong party politician. He was ever advocating the claims and the dignities of the Achæan League, of which he was a very leading member; he is ever praising the political and military qualities of these Achæans and Arcadians, who produced at that time so many remarkable men, and made so interesting an essay in international politics. On the other hand, he will not say a good word for the neighbouring league of Ætolia, which was no less important, and which, owing to its naval side, found members far away through the Greek world. He calls this league a mere set of pirates and thieves, and accounts for their importance, and the respect with which they were treated by kings and states in international questions, by the statement that systematic injustice and violence cease to excite the indignation which single acts of the kind do, so that the villain on principle is always more regarded and less censured than the respectable man who commits a crime.

His contempt for the Ætolian League.

Such a judgment only shows how bitter a partisan Polybius could be; yet the facts of his history make it plain that the standard of honesty, both political and social, was very low at this epoch throughout the Hellenistic world. This was the striking fact which came out when the Greeks were compared with the Romans in their first diplomatic relations. If a Roman gives you his word you may trust him implicitly; he will restore you a fortune if you intrust it to him; whereas sheaves of oaths and crowds of witnesses will not secure a single talent for you in the hands of a Greek. These contrasts of national honesty are very curious, all the

Contrast between Roman honesty and Greek treachery.

more curious because the old Spartan type in Greece had been above the smallest suspicion of lying, while the Roman aristocrats degenerated so rapidly by contact with the Hellenistic world that honesty became as rare among them as a white crow. The whole policy even of the Roman Senate, in Polybius's own day, was full of tortuous deceit; if the collected body did not state open falsehoods this business was committed to individual commissioners or envoys who promised what they liked, threatened whom they chose, and repudiated what they found inconvenient.

Degradation of the Romans due to contact with the Greeks.

Polybius, who is picturesque enough, and who has left us some pages of brilliant descriptions, though his style cannot be called elegant, is nowhere more striking than when he describes (xxxix., 8-9) the despair that fell upon the Peloponnesus, and indeed all Greece, when the ultra-democratic party broke out openly against the cold and selfish tyranny of the Romans, and brought upon them the Roman legions. Conquest in those days was ruthless and brutal, but in this case all the more so because a strong, dominant, coarse people overthrew the silly and sentimental resistance of a people they disliked and despised, and disliked all the more because they were unable to despise them without reservations.

Conquest of Greece by the Romans described by Polybius.

For when all was said that could be said against the Greeks, the fact remained that in the arts and refinements of life all other nations were bound to borrow from them and imitate them, nor could the Greek, even were he a captive or a slave, conceal his contempt for his boorish captor, or efface the contrast which any man could see between the loutish master and the lettered slave. Polybius was present at the sack of Corinth, and told how he had seen soldiers playing dice

Failure of the Romans to appreciate the art treasures of Greece.

upon the precious pictures of renowned artists; others added that Mummius had sent his spoil—unique pictures, statues, ornaments—to Italy under contract with the skippers that they should replace anything which was lost! This honest and bluff Roman, whom Polybius considers not only just but even humane, had no appreciation of Greek fineries. And yet he was a far safer master than the snob who abandoned the simplicity of his fathers, wore Greek clothes, and lisped bad Greek, wrote books in Greek (corrected by his slaves), and vaunted his descent from Æneas or his Trojan band. These creatures had their Greek parallels—men like Charops the Ætolian, who used his fortune to live at Rome, speak Latin, and teach the Romans to despise his countrymen. The essays in approximation between Greece and Rome were therefore at this moment most unfortunate, and made by the most contemptible classes.

Græcomania among the Romans.

In art, of course, there was no question about Greek superiority, but the Romans failed for a long time to see that the importation of ready-made foreign refinement is of little use, when the temper and taste of the recipients are not sufficiently prepared. Polybius tells of one of the early attempts to introduce flute playing, dancing, and choral singing at the triumph of a victorious general, L. Apicius, who had brought with him artists from Greece (XXX., 14). When these famous performers began the audience were at first puzzled, then bored; at last a lictor indicated to them that the public expected something of a physical contest. The ready Greeks presently took up the idea, and the affair ended in a free fight on the stage, to the complete satisfaction of the crowd. "What I have to say about the performance of the Greek tragedies at the same time," says Polybius, "will seem a humorous invention"; but here the frag-

Greek refinement in the arts not appreciated by the Romans at this time.

ment breaks off, and we are left without further details.

Such, then, were the general conditions of Greece when the absorbing process by Rome began. It proceeded by stages. Corinth was destroyed and Achæa made a district under a Roman governor in 146 B. C. Then the kingdom of Pergamum was bequeathed by Attalus III. to the Romans and occupied by them as a province in 130. There came a pause during the internal dissensions of the Gracchi, then of the great Social War, and the conquest of Spain. But no sooner were the military forces of the republic free than Pompey conquered and settled the Seleucid dominion; last of all came the formal conquest of Egypt, spared long after the fruit was ripe by the old and close friendship which its dynasty had kept up with Rome, then when all such considerations had no weight with Roman greed, when the mutual jealousies of the leaders feared to let any one ambitious man handle the vast wealth of this unique kingdom. This is the general outline; but for our purposes it must be carefully remembered that the sentimentality and the policy of the Romans not only permitted but encouraged what they called free and independent cities all through the Hellenistic world. It was in these cities, impoverished, decayed, often treated with brutal tyranny, that the Greek culture of former days maintained itself, and recovered into no insignificant after-bloom. Even for them there was a frightful pause in the early days of Roman domination. When young patrician ruffians were let loose as prætors or governors into these provinces, there was no sort of oppression perpetrated by any old tyrant which exceeded their crimes. We have the case of Verres whom Cicero attacked, that of Flaccus whom he defended, which was perhaps nearly as bad; we have the horrid

Gradual absorption of Greece into the Roman Empire.

The conquest of Egypt.

Violence and extortion practised by Roman governors in their provinces.

picture drawn by Seneca of the Roman prætor walking about the public place at Ephesus among heads and lictors and bodies, and when he heard the sound of the rods, and saw the executions going on, perhaps for some small offence, exclaimed with pride: "This is indeed royal state!"

Roman speculators in the provinces.

In addition to these villains was another class not less destructive of all leisure and tranquillity, still more of any further developments of art or culture. I mean the speculators who sought to squeeze from the provinces gold for their luxuries or their ambitions at Rome. The two classes of miscreants were not indeed distinct; cruelty, ostentation, and avarice were often blended in these descendants of the honest and noble men who had conquered Italy, and then had commenced, against their will, to conquer the world. For the better of them knew well enough, while they were drifting from one foreign complication to another, that wild ambitions were abroad, that the advocates of a strong outward policy were not honestly trying to secure the frontiers of Italy, but hoping for great careers for themselves.

Roman domination inevitable.

The force of events was, however, too strong. Polybius himself does not see how Roman domination could have been avoided; and how rapidly honesty and all other good principles died out of a people that had no culture to depend on appears very clearly when we take account of the case of Brutus, "the noblest Roman of them all," which Cicero lets out in his correspondence from Cilicia. He wanted, through an agent called Scaptius, to extract forty-eight per cent for a loan to the city of Salamis in Cyprus, and because they did not pay, shut up the senate of the city in their council house, till one of them actually died of hunger! This was the tender creature who could not bear his companions, the

Roman aristocracy, to lose their license of harrying the world, and so murdered his benefactor, and the world's benefactor, because he crushed at once this shocking republican tyranny. This was the same Brutus who, in his campaign against Octavian and Antony, offered his mercenary army, as a reward, the sack of perfectly innocent Greek cities. There has seldom been a worse criminal than Brutus, and all the worse because he assumes before the world the air of an apostle and a martyr, still worse even because the creature persuaded himself of his own moral magnificence, and performed his detestable crimes with the air of piety and virtue. These were the men who aped and crushed Greek culture and Greek letters; these were the men who, when plundering by individual magistrates was stopped, fought out their great civil war for supremacy on Greek ground, and with Greek treasure and Greek blood.

Cold-blooded cruelty of Brutus.

If the rapid Roman degradation be a striking sign of the moral dangers of the want of education, the maintenance of a high standard in the Greek world, in spite of the terrible misfortunes of the first century B. C., is an equally striking proof of the inestimable value of that culture. There were indeed many polished villains, many complaisant slaves, many advisers of evil, among the Greeks who sought service in Roman houses. There were philosophers resident there, in somewhat the position of private chaplains, who knew how to justify the vices of their patrons by Epicurean philosophy, and who were not very bold to contradict a Roman senator when he put the coarsest construction upon the maxim of the pursuit of pleasure. Cicero has drawn a very interesting picture of this sort of philosophical education in his ribald speech "against Piso." But even

Private philosophers maintained in Roman houses.

Philodemus of Gadara.

this creature had his domestic philosopher, the well-known Philodemus, whose many tracts have been recovered from the lava of Herculaneum, and apparently from his own (and Piso's) country library.*

Thus it happened that when the empire was established, and the real *pax Romana*, with the blessed relief of the suffering provincials, became an accomplished fact, the Hellenistic culture became more than ever the culture of the world. The Romans had attained to the dignity of a conquering race; they could now boast of two or three generations of passable education; they who at the beginning of the epoch had been dying to pose as Greeks, now began to fancy themselves the more refined, and to speak even of the Greeks among the "foreign nations." But all their posing and all their assertion of their own high qualities against their eastern neighbours could not blind any man to the fact that they owed all the more refined side of their life to Greece. What Romans would ever have produced during the troubles and terrors of the first century B. C. such books as those of Diodorus or of Strabo? What Roman could attempt even to copy with success any Greek masterpiece in marble or in colour? What Roman could think out any new philosophic system, and not rather follow afar off the instructions of Zeno, Epicurus, Arcesilaus, Carneades, so far as he could understand them? The cooking in great houses was done by Greeks, the waiting also; the appointments of the table were copied from the splendours of Antioch, Alexandria, or Pergamum; old ware and silver were named and prized according to the Greek workshop which had produced it; even polite conversation was better carried on

Roman debt to Greek culture.

Romans lacked power to originate.

* Concerning this man and Piso *cf.* my "Greek World under Roman Sway," pages 127 *sq.*

in Greek. If the vices of Rome also became Greek, it does not imply that they increased in quantity or intensity; the vices of boors are as great, and far more disgusting, than those of gentlemen; refinement is generally on the side of virtue, and the love of the beautiful in no way opposed to the love of the good.

Predominance of Greek art and refinement in Rome.

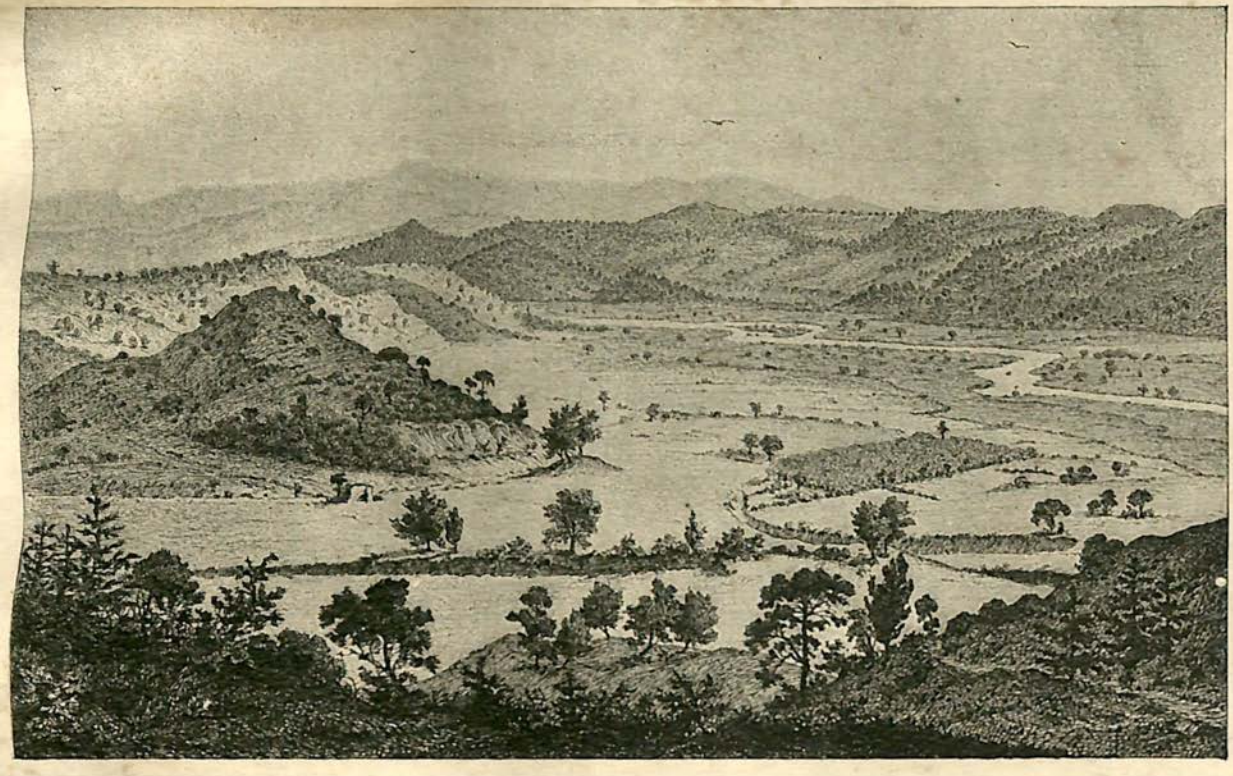
Thus we have brought the subject down to the days of the nascent empire, and may pause to consider how far Augustus and his successors were influenced by Hellenistic civilization, and how far they sought to make it their model in the administration of their vast estate. The constitution established, or adopted from the views of Julius Cæsar, who was a man of ideas as well as of action, had evidently many important features borrowed from Hellenistic models. Cæsar had already ordered the mensuration of the empire by the skilled surveyors who did that work on a small scale in the ever-changing farms of the Nile Valley. He had likewise reformed the calendar according to the changes commanded (but not carried out) in the decree of Canopus.*

Constitution of the Roman Empire borrowed from Hellenistic models.

Augustus went in the same direction. Pretending, like the kings of Pergamum, to be the accidental president or head of a republic, he allowed all the old forms to be kept up, while he interfered, not only by having his nominees elected by the people, but by making his administrators all powerful in some provinces, by claiming a large royal estate from the domain of the republic, by keeping control of the army, and establishing a household corps in the city, by making the privy council of his friends or advisers more important than any of the decisions of the senate. Still more significant was the establishment of the worship of Augustus

The worship of the emperors.

* *Cf.* my "Empire of the Ptolemies," page 235, for the text of the decree on this important point.



General View of Olympia. From Bötticher's "Olympia."

and of the fortune of Rome as a common cult in all the cities of the empire. This was exactly what the Ptolemies had done, when they procured the proclamation by the priests that their statues were to be set up in each of the temples and beside the various gods of Egypt, being declared *contemplar gods*.

All these things were therefore borrowed from Alexandria or from Pergamum. Augustus indeed made a show of speaking Latin, and speaking it purely, but at every turn he must have spoken Greek to servants, confidential secretaries, artists, professional men; he was fond of sojourning at Samos or Rhodes, and so breathing Hellenic air and quaffing Hellenic refinement. The poets of this age showed themselves as completely addicted to Greek models as their predecessors, but it so happened that Virgil was far greater than the rest, and that Horace went back to far better and older models. It is for this reason that these Augustan poets have made such a reputation for their age as a literary age. Yet they were not less beholden to the Greeks for metre, subject, and treatment than our architects are nowadays to Gothic or classical models. It was as impossible for a Roman to work out an original subject and style in poetry as it is for an Englishman now to construct a building in a style which shall not be borrowed from classical, Renaissance, or Gothic models. And in both cases the highest originality is asserted for those that borrow most deftly, and steal without confining their theft to one model.

Augustan poets and their Greek models.

Greek culture was therefore in greater demand than ever, though the Romans had for one hundred and fifty years done all they could to damage or destroy it, and though the mischief done was irreparable. It was all very well for humane and enlightened emperors to

Greek culture still supreme.

spend great sums on the restoration of decayed or ruined cities in Greece and Asia Minor, and to set up colonnades and temples, to remit taxes in years of earthquake or famine. The health and vitality of the race were gone. They could still teach their old masters; they could still copy their old statues; they could still expound the revived systems of Greek philosophy; but the age of new creation, of development, of great ideas, was gone.

Vitality of the Greek race apparently decayed forever.

To all appearance these things were gone forever; yet after a century's rest we find this wonderful mine yielding new veins of ore; we find it the vehicle for the Christian religion; we find in Greek what could never have been written in any other language, the gospels of Jesus Christ, the epistles of St. Paul, the orations of Dio Chrysostom, the "Lives" of Plutarch. Of these we shall speak presently. For the present we must delay to note that still in the decayed towns of Greece there were shadowy assemblies, powerless resolutions of councils and citizens, elections to high offices—all the outward show and paraphernalia of the antique free city. What was much more interesting to Romans and foreigners of taste, there were numerous festivals for athletics and for literary contests, some, like the Olympian and Pythian games, reaching back into hoar antiquity, others founded in Hellenistic days, where the old customs and old amenities of life were shown to visitors, especially visitors of the dominant race. There were still the Eleusinian Mysteries, sacred rites in Samothrace and elsewhere, where the pious and the archæological could find ample edification and instruction, and there still remain countless inscriptions set up in honour of rich citizens, or benevolent strangers, for having spent money and care upon the endowment and sustain-

The survival of the Greek games and the Eleusinian Mysteries.

ment of these ceremonies. It became the fashion of noble Romans to give endowments of various kinds to the Greeks; an Appius Claudius built a new entrance to the great temple of Demeter at Eleusis, of which the foundations are now visible; Cicero contemplated something similar; and the remaining Hellenistic kings in the East emulated in the first years of the empire the liberalities whereby the Hellenistic monarchs and tyrants had kept the furious hatreds of the democracies in abeyance, and even produced pompous decrees of good-will toward themselves from the men who would cry, the same day, "Death to the tyrant." But the Greeks never showed much dislike on principle to a tyrant who did not press upon themselves, especially if he was liberal with gifts. Who had been the great benefactors to Athens, Olympia, Delphi, among the Hellenistic kings? First of all, the Ptolemies, bad and good, who were almost always on good terms with the Greek democracies, then individually Eumenes II., who had bought the island of Ægina from the victorious Romans for ready money, and whose offers of money to condone this act were so indiscreet as to produce the rarest of phenomena, a refusal on the part of the Achæan League,* then Antiochus Epiphanes, who filled Greece with his donations, then Herod the Great. Now both the latter were active propagators of Hellenism in their own dominions, and both had striven to force its customs upon the recalcitrant Jews; inside their own dominions, therefore, they were godless and ruthless tyrants; in Greece or Asia Minor they were mild and generous benefactors, blessed in honorary decrees by many grateful communities.

Roman endowment of Greek temples.

Benefactors of Greece among the Hellenistic kings.

This long habit of receiving donations and begging

* *Cf.* Polybius XXII., 10-12.

for them, this long obsequiousness to the great people of other lands, this pliant submission to the task of making tyrants popular and masters seem cultivated, would surely have degraded any other people than the Greeks. But their ancient heritage could not all be taken from them. There were still in many temples of the land statues of gods and goddesses, portraits of heroic men, which fascinated the world, and made Greece the favourite ground for all intelligent pleasure-seekers. Like the Italy of our day, with its wonderful mediæval riches, so Greece in Roman days was the tourist's Elysium. We still have from the land of Pausanius, an enthusiastic archæologist in the second century, a description of the old sites, shrines, and historic monuments all over the country, and then at least we find that public taste had gone beyond the Golden Age back to the archaic, and admired things not because they were beautiful, but because they were old. Even the rudest things that remained then found men to study them, and profess that they loved them, as is often the case in our own century.

Greece a favourite haunt of Roman tourists.

But I must hurry on to the great books which mark the close of my subject. After the spread of Christianity the power of Hellenism indeed remains, but the interests of the world are changing. Up to the flourishing and thoroughly Hellenistic reign of Hadrian this is not so, and we have a splendid afterglow, or shall I call it a Martinmas summer, in literature, which shows very clearly that much of the old gentleness and urbanity and real refinement lived throughout the cities, and even in the glens and mountains of this fascinating country.

The afterglow of Greek literature.

But let us say a word in passing upon the Greek of Palestine in the middle of the first century, that Greek which comes before us in the New Testament. Nothing

is more indisputable than that the Greek language, and not the Hebrew, was from the first the vehicle of the new world-religion. To any one who has considered the conditions of the Roman Empire at that time, the thing seems not only obvious but necessary. A religion preached in Latin or in Hebrew could never have extended over the world. The "common dialect," which was known to every society from the Tigris to the Tagus, was the essential vehicle for such a movement. I advert next to the fact that the language as used by the men of Judæa appears to us from an artistic point of view vastly superior to the laboured and rhetorical work which we find among learned writers in this century. To those who are familiar with first century "common dialect" there appears at once in the Synoptic Gospels a simplicity, a picturesqueness perfectly new and strange, and fresh up to the present day. The actual language is not refined Greek, the vocabulary is poor, the grammatical forms often debased ; but far above these details is the spirit, the literary conception of a life to be written without ornament, without reflection, without the writer's personality, without moral applications. I cannot express to the reader how strange this all appears to me in that age and in that society. Yet to all this Greek lends itself perfectly, and speaks with this new voice as with all the many voices it had already assumed.

The Greek of the New Testament.

Artistic perfection in the New Testament.

When we come to such books as St. John's gospel and the epistles of St. Paul, we again find ourselves in a familiar atmosphere. Here we have the metaphysical side, the language of the schools, the terms of philosophy, used by men who had studied in the manner that Greeks only studied, and who spoke to an audience more intelligent than any average public from that day to this. It is still to me a matter of daily wonder how

High average mental training of the Greeks proved by the epistles of St. Paul.

His metaphysics understood by the average Hellenistic audience.

the epistles of St. Paul, addressed not to the *élite* of society, not to the learned, or the members of the schools, but to lower classes, to slaves, at best to the average society of the city he addressed, could not only have been intelligible, but practical and effective teaching. After centuries of commentary and explanation, after a familiarity of many years, we learn to follow their subtle and tangled arguments. But what should we say if any of them appeared now suddenly as open letters addressed to any ordinary city in America? The apostle himself was a trained man, versed in the controversies of the schools at Tarsus, and from such in that day we might fairly expect considerable mental training, but what shall we say of his hearers? Perhaps in the whole of the preceding volume I have produced no argument so convincing to an American audience of the abnormally high position I claim for the average Greek civilization. The arguments of the early Christian teachers are addressed, I contend, to hearers far more educated in the proper sense than we are. Their faculties of apprehension of an argument, sustained attention to its details, readiness to grasp its intricacies, were far higher than ours. Nor can we say that it was affair of race. The populations addressed by Paul were, mixed in blood, confused in nationality, often oriental, often occidental, agreeing only in the one primary condition: they had all learned Greek, and through it they had been compelled to adopt Hellenistic culture.

This culture not an affair of race.

Further than this I dare not go into the questions which encompass the relation of this great engine of civilization to the new force which Jesus Christ had just brought into the world. This is no book of theology, still less of controversy, and the mere suggestions I have made will be enough for the frame which I now desire to fill.

I will not delay the reader with the lighter effusions of the day, that host of epigrams which remained fashionable for some centuries and which are collected in the big book called the "Anthology." For these exercises of wit are seldom serious; they are only meant to show the artist's cunning; what real life they regard is of a description not suitable for general discussion. But there were serious men in the closing first century whose work is even now well worth studying: Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the archæologist and critic; the author of the tract "On the Sublime"; Dio of Prusa (called Chrysostom); and, above all, Plutarch. These men honoured learning, advocated good taste, and promoted good morals and educated life. Yet their works are so little read nowadays that I feel constrained to cite passages from them in support of what I say. Let us consider what Dio recommended by way of the best reading in a time when the world had been flooded with all manner of tawdry and meretricious literature.

Epigrams in the "Anthology."

Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

Dio of Prusa.

Let Homer of course be your daily spiritual bread, the beginning, middle, and end of every culture, for young and old, who gives to each as much as he can receive. Lyric and elegiac poetry is all very well, if you have great leisure, otherwise you may pass it by. Thus in tragedy you may prefer Euripides, and in comedy Menander to the older *and perhaps greater* masters, because they contain more practical wisdom. History is essential, but Herodotus for charm and Thucydides for excellence are far superior to Ephorus, Theopompus, and the rest.

The reading recommended by Dio.

In oratory Demosthenes is of course supreme in force and Lysias in the disguise of force, but Dio recommends Hypereides and Æschines, as it is easier to understand their art. Nor will he object to the modern rhetoricians of the previous generation being studied, especially as men approach them with a free critical spirit, and not in

In oratory Dio recommends Hypereides and Æschines.

that slavish admiration which they feel toward the ancients. Among Socratic thinkers none is serviceable to the man of action except Xenophon, who indeed is in history also the most perfect and excellent of masters.

Such is the training in letters recommended by the most eminent orator of his century. It is only vague and general, not going into any detailed criticism; and this generality is also the character of the tract "On the Sublime," formerly attributed to Longinus, but now placed by general agreement at the close of the Augustan Age, and in that moment of reaction from Alexandrianism and Asianism to the pure Atticism of the Golden Age. This essay seeks to stimulate a taste for the real masterpieces in letters rather than to give any analysis of their excellence; it is the writing of a clever *dilettante* rather than of a professor, and though very valuable in directing the public taste, can hardly be said to have contained new knowledge. And yet among all the books of this age none has received more attention than this remarkable tract. It is certainly the most modern and enlightened of all that the Greeks have left us on the theory of art. Unfortunately the text is miserably lacerated, and often breaks off in the middle of an important discussion.

The treatise "On the Sublime" formerly attributed to Longinus.

The general attitude the author assumes is that though genius is distinctly heaven-born, its splendid results are attained by using the resources of art. He rightly holds fast to the great Greek principle that nothing perfect can be produced without study, that spontaneity may suggest but will never work out what is really beautiful or majestic. But at the same time he agrees perfectly with modern criticism in recognizing that irregularities may be only a flaw in genius of the highest order, perhaps even a characteristic of such

Outlines of the treatise.

genius, seeing that unvarying correctness is seldom, if ever, the attribute of the highest work. Thus in criticising the rhetor Cæcilius, who was evidently the advocate of strict correctness, and who consequently placed the pellucid but thin graces of Lysias above the richness of Plato, he breaks out into the following reflections : Criticism of the rhetor Cæcilius.

What was in the minds of those godlike men who aimed at the highest perfections of their art, when they despised minute accuracy of detail? This among many other considerations, that nature hath not made our species mean and ignoble creatures, but introducing us to life and all the universe around it as to a great festival and pageant, to be spectators of all its grandeur and keen competitors for its prizes, hath engrained in our souls an indelible love of everything that is great and therefore more divine than ourselves. Hence it is that to the speculation of man and the reach of his imagination not all the universe sufficeth, but our thoughts are ever passing its furthest bounds, so that if any one will consider in his own life how far the great exceeds the beautiful, he will know forthwith whereunto we were created. It is nature which tells us not to admire the rivulet though it be pellucid and fit for use, but the Nile, the Ister, the Rhine, and above all the ocean ; nor are we struck by the fire upon the hearth, however clear be its flame, but rather by the celestial fires, oft though they be obscured, or again by the crater of Ætna, whose eruptions cast from its abysses great rocks and vast masses, and send forth rushing torrents of essential fire. Man is born to strive after the ideal.

On these grounds he worships the capricious and variable Plato, and appreciates the splendours of the rugged Thucydides. If there be a flaw in his judgment it is in his coldness toward Aristophanes.

Far more precise were the studies of Dionysius on the great prose writers of his people, especially on the orators ; and had all his work been preserved we might well say that ancient criticism had nothing more to add to his researches. And yet even he does not seem to have led a school, but to have been an independent thinker. Dionysius's studies of Greek prose writers.

His extant studies upon Demosthenes and upon Thucydides make us regret deeply the loss of most of his parallel studies on the other orators. Dio, in some of his orations, speaks as if the decadence of Greece was hopeless and complete. But we cannot but suspect that some allowance must be made for this citizen of a second-rate and newly civilized town in remote Asia Minor, who cannot but have desired to uphold Asiatic Hellenism and other prosperous Asiatic Greeks, at the expense of the poor and decayed cities of older and greater fame in Greece itself.

Partial revival of Greece.

For there is considerable reason to think that the days of Dio were by no means the worst which Greece had seen, but that a considerable revival had taken place since its complete exhaustion after the great civil wars with their terrible requisitions upon life and property. It is true, and very remarkable, that Asia Minor revived and recovered her commercial prosperity with promptitude and lasting success, whereas that of Greece can hardly ever be called flourishing again till the trade in silk and in currants made some stir in Justinian's time. Still there were always certain articles of export which, in other days and with other habits, would have employed much industry. Horses from the now extended pastures of the depopulated country, oil from other provinces as well as Attica, honey from the slopes of Mount Hymettus, were always prized. Far more profitable to labour was the production—no longer as a fine art, but as a trade—of statues at Athens and elsewhere for the adornment of Asiatic and Italian temples; so were the famous marble quarries of the Cyclades, which seem, however, like the gold and silver mines, to have been often a monopoly of the Roman *fiscus*, and thus less productive than might be expected.

Trade in statues.

Dio was an itinerant orator, who desired 'to be thought a moral preacher, not teaching any special philosophy but using his great eloquence to enforce the ordinary and received catalogue of social and moral virtues, especially the social which were akin to politics, and which affected the general well-being of each city. For this purpose he not only uses argument, but parables, if I may so call the picturesque descriptions of remote or primitive life among poor and unknown Greeks, which are meant in their simplicity and purity to afford a contrast to the life in Alexandria or in Antioch. I shall quote from the two most remarkable.

Dio a preacher of morals.

The first is the picture he gives of life at Borysthenes, a Greek settlement at the mouth of the Dnieper on the north coast of the Euxine, whose inhabitants had long been severed from their mother country, and surrounded with Scythian barbarians far more intractable to civilization than Parthians or even Celts. The introduction to this speech, which is really an essay on monarchy, as suggested by monotheism, or monarchy among the gods, is like the scenery of the oration "On Poverty," which we shall presently discuss; and therefore I cannot but suspect the former, as I suspect the latter, of being mere dramatic invention. Thus in discussing with the Borysthenites the Platonic view that the rule of one man is best, he never once alludes to the fact that the "Bosporan kingdom," which included the Crimea and the Greek marts on either side of it, had not been for a long time under the control of *kings*—the last kings tolerated within the Roman sway, a nominal kingdom till the reign of Constantine. In Dio's time Pliny mentions a messenger from King Sauromates coming to Nicæa. If it be however true that the town of Olbia (the other name for Borysthenes) was left independent, it would still be more odd that he should discuss with a "free people" the propriety of monarchy without the smallest allusion to the practical bearing of the question. Still, as he repeats in his "Olympica" that he had visited this outlying region from curiosity, I think we may, in this case, accept the sophist's picture as historical.

Dio's picture of life at Borysthenes.

Description of the Euxine cities.

He begins with a very graphic description of the city lying

Dio's description of Borysthenes.

on a tongue of land where the great rivers Borysthenes and Tanais meet, and thence continue their course to the sea over vast shallows studded with lofty reeds, which appear like a forest of masts to approaching mariners. Here was the great factory for preparing salt which supplied all the barbarians of the interior. The city itself he found greatly shrunken away by successive stormings of the surrounding barbarians, with whom it had been for centuries at war—the last great reverse being the conquest by the Getæ of the whole coast as far as Apollonia about 120 B. C. From this the Greek cities had never recovered, some being wholly deserted, others rebuilt on a small scale, and obliged to admit barbarians as occupiers. Borysthenes, however, was settled again, to serve as a mart for the Scythians with the Greeks, who would otherwise have abandoned altogether any attempt to deal with the barbarians. Yet even in its restored state the houses were mean and the area of the city contracted. It was attached, so to speak, to part of the old circuit wall, with a few towers remaining of the old size and strength. The new wall, which joins the arc of the old circuit, is low and weak, and the area within only partially occupied by houses. There are solitary towers still standing out in the country far apart from the present town. Another sign of its old disaster is that not a single statue in the shrines is intact, but all are mutilated, as are also those on the other monuments of the city.

Greek cities weakened by attacks of the barbarians.

His meeting with the inhabitants.

Such was the town which Dio was observing with interest on a summer forenoon from the suburb along the river. Some of the townsmen joined him, and there comes up on horseback a fine young man, who dismounts and gives his horse to an attendant.

"Under his short light black Greek cloak (black in imitation of the Scythians) he had a huge sword and trousers, and in fact Scythian dress. This Callistratus was reputed equally formidable in battle and zealous in philosophy. Indeed the whole population is so devoted to Homer and to the worship of his Achilles (whose temple is on a neighbouring island) that though they talk very bad and barbarized Greek, most of them have Homer off by heart; a few go so far as to study Plato."

Dio then quotes to them a saw of Phocylides, whose name they do not know, and makes some disparaging remark on Homer and his many details of Achilles's jumping and shout-

ing, while the Gnomic poet gathers much ethical wisdom into a couplet. They tell Dio that but for their extreme respect and liking for him, no citizen of the place would have tolerated any aspersion upon the divine Achilles and the well-nigh divine Homer. But they are ready to hear what Dio has to say, even though they run some risk in discoursing with him outside the city.

Their worship of Homer.

"For yesterday at noon the Scythians surprised our sentries, slaying some, and taking others alive, as we did not know which way they had fled, and could not help them, and even then the gates had been shut, and the war signal was flying from the walls."

Dio's discourse in the city.

Yet so keen were they that they all came down armed to hear him. Dio then proposes not to discourse on the promenade, but to go inside the city, and they gather at the public place in front of the Temple of Zeus—the magistrates and elders sitting round upon stone steps, and the crowd standing behind them. The sight was delightful to a philosopher, to see these people dressed in antique fashion with long hair and beards, one of them only being cropped and shaven, much to their disgust and contempt. For he was supposed to be obsequious to the Romans and to have adopted their fashion accordingly.

I need not go into Dio's discourse, which is most politely interrupted by one who tells him how scarce is a decent visitor in these parts.

"For most of the Greeks who come are more barbarous than we are, traders and hucksters, bringing in worthless rags and bad wine and getting nothing better in exchange."

Starting from a query about Plato, Dio then discourses in favour of an intelligent monarchy.

Let us now turn to a very different picture—that of primitive rural life in his seventh oration.

Dio's picture of primitive rural life.

"This [he opens] I am going to narrate from my own experience, not from hearsay. For perhaps loquacity and the difficulty of dropping a subject are not only features of old age —they may also be the characteristics bred by a roving life, probably because in each case there are many experiences which men recall with pleasure. I am now going to tell what men and manners I stumbled upon, I may say, in the midst of Hellas.

"I happened to be crossing from Chios with some fishermen

in a very little boat, not in the summer season. A great storm rose, and with difficulty we escaped into the 'hollows of Eubœa.' There they smashed the boat, running her ashore on a rough shingle beach under the cliffs, and they went off to some purple-shell fishers at anchor inside the nearest claw of land, intending to work with them and remain there. So I was left behind alone, with no place of refuge, and I was wandering at random along the shore, on the chance of meeting some ship at anchor or sailing by. After a long walk, during which I did not meet a soul, I came upon a buck which had just fallen from the cliff down to the very edge of the water, still gasping as it was being touched by the waves. And presently I thought I heard the baying of dogs far above me, indistinctly by reason of the roar of the sea. Proceeding therefore, and climbing up with great difficulty to the height above me, I found the dogs beating about, which I concluded had forced the game to spring over the cliff, and presently I came upon a man, whose look and dress implied a hunter, of healthy complexion, wearing his hair long behind in no unmanly fashion, but like the Eubœans whom Homer describes coming to Troy. And he hailed me: 'Stranger, have you seen a buck coming this way?' to which I answered: 'There he is in the wash of the sea'; and I brought him down to his game. So he drew the buck back from the water, and skinned him with his knife, I helping as well as I could, and then he took the haunches with the skin, and proceeded to carry them away. He invited me too to follow and eat a share of the venison, as his dwelling was not far off. 'When you have rested the night with us you can come back to the sea, since at present sailing is impossible; nor need you apprehend that there will be a change while you are resting, for I should be glad to think the storm would subside within the next five days, but it is not likely, so long as you see the mountain tops capped with clouds as they now are.' He went on to ask whence I came, and how I got there, and whether my boat was not wrecked. 'It was a very small one,' I answered, 'belonging to fishermen, who were crossing, and I, being pressed for time, was their only passenger, but we were wrecked upon the shore.' 'Very naturally—look how wild the coast is. This is what they call the "hollows of Eubœa," and a ship driven in here hardly ever gets out again. Even the crews are generally lost, unless they are in

Shipwreck in the "hollows of Eubœa."

Dio and the huntsman.

very light boats, like yours. But come with me and don't fear. First get over your fatigues, and to-morrow we shall consult what to do to send you on safe, as we have now made acquaintance with you. For you seem to me some city person, not a sailor or a mechanic, and to have worn down your body by some other kind of hardship than theirs.' I of course went with him gladly, for I never was afraid of being robbed, having nothing with me but a shabby cloak—so hallowed and sacrosanct a thing have I found poverty, which men violate more rarely even than they would a herald with his insignia.

"On the way he told me how he lived with his wife and children. 'There are two of us living in the same place; we have married sisters, and both have sons and daughters. We live mostly by the chase, with the help of a little farming. For the land is not ours, but our fathers were poor and free like ourselves, earning their bread by herding cattle for one of the rich men of this island who possessed many droves of horses and oxen, many flocks of sheep, many broad acres, and much other wealth; in fact all the mountains you see around you. But when he died, and his property was confiscated—they say he was put to death by the emperor [Nero?] for the sake of his wealth—his herds were at once driven away, and with them some of our few poor beasts, and nobody thought of paying our wages. So we had to remain where we were with what cattle we had left, setting up some tents, and a courtyard fenced with paling, not large but secure, on account of the calves, for our summer use. For in winter we grazed the plains, where we had plenty of grass and made hay. In the summer we go off to the mountains.'" A hunter's life.

The orator proceeds to describe in detail the beautiful situation of these hunters' home, on a slope close to running water, with fruitful patches of land well manured from their stable, and fair trees giving ample shade. And as they had spare time they turned from herding to hunting with their dogs; for when the cattle were all driven away, two of the dogs who went with them, missing the herdsmen, turned back after some time to their accustomed home. Beautiful situation of the hunter's home.

"These dogs followed the herdsmen, and only gradually learned to pursue game, being originally mere watch-dogs to keep off wolves. 'But when winter came on our parents had no out-of-door work, and they never went down to the city or

any village ; so they made their huts and courtyards water-tight and comfortable, and took into cultivation the land about them, and found hunting far easier in the winter. For tracks are clearer in the wet soil, and snow shows the game far off, and leaves tracks as clear as a high road.' "

So they settled there, and were content. The two original settlers were now dead, having lived out a hale and vigorous old age. One of their widows still remained. It was her son whom Dio had met.

The hunter's visit to the city.

" 'The other man [his cousin] has never been to the city, though now fifty years old, but I twice only—once with my father when we kept the great man's herds, and again when a man came asking us for money, as if we had any, and commanding us to follow him to the city. We swore we had none, for we would have given it to him at once if we had. So we entertained him as best we could, and gave him two buckskins, and then I went with him to the city [probably Carystos, though Dio takes care to leave it so vague that Chalcis would suit as well]. For he said one of us must go and tell all about it. So I saw again many great houses and a strong wall round them with square towers in it, and many ships lying in the harbour, as if in an inland lake. We have nothing like it here, where you landed ; that is why the ships get lost. These things I saw and a great crowd gathered together with much confusion and shouting, so that I thought there was a general fight going on.

" 'The man then brought me to the magistrates, and said laughing : "This is the man you sent me for, but he owns nothing except his back hair and a hut of very strong sticks !" Then the magistrates went to the theatre, and I along with them.' "

The hunter here describes the theatre, adding :

A public meeting.

" 'Perhaps you are laughing at me for telling you what you know quite well. For some time the mob was engaged at other things, at times shouting in good humour and applauding, at times the very reverse. This, their anger, was dangerous, and they terrified the men at whom they shouted, so that some went round supplicating, and some threw off their cloaks in dread, for the sound was like a sudden wave, or thunder. Indeed I myself was almost knocked down by the shout. And various people got up to address the assembly from the midst

of it, or from the stage; some with few words, others with many. Some they listened to for a long time; others they would not stand from the outset, or allow them to utter a syllable.'"

I cannot give the sequel, which goes on through several pages of additional matter not less interesting, and which ends with a charming love affair.* But enough has been said to show that in the opinion of this very competent judge, the lowest and poorest country people and the most outlying settlements belonging to the Hellenic nation still maintained that high level of intelligence and of taste which made them the models and the instructors of surrounding nations.

Plutarch not a traveller.

We pass in conclusion to Plutarch, who, if Dio was a roving or vagabond teacher, practising his persuasiveness upon all the cities of Asiatic Greece in turn and even going to Rome on his mission, was the very opposite; a stay-at-home in the small town of Chæronea in Bœotia, which he would not desert, says he, lest so it might become smaller. But from here he sent out his moral and historical treatises into the world, where they have never ceased to be popular, often to be most effective in their teaching. All political life of a serious kind was gone; the public questions which remained were not worth quarrelling about; though this consideration does not seem to have allayed local jealousies and heart-burnings.

Plutarch's resemblance to Polybius.

It is this altered state of public life which justifies Plutarch's portrait of the ideal Greek citizen, the popular man in the true sense of the word, a portrait which we cannot but suspect to be intended for his own. For the naïve self-consciousness of the man appears through every part of his works. In this, as in so many other

*The reader will find the full text in my "Greek World under Roman Sway," Chap. XII.

features, both of his inner spirit and his outward surroundings, does he remind us of Polybius, whose principles and policy, though adopted at the very outset of this decadence, were so closely analogous. Upon this resemblance I desire particularly to insist, for I know no more remarkable evidence of the persistence of the same kind of life and thinking in Greece for at least two hundred years. Here is the portrait in question:

Plutarch's portrait of the ideal Greek citizen.

> First of all let him be easy of access, and the common property of all; keeping open house, as it were a harbour of refuge to all that need it; showing his protection and his generosity not merely in cases of want and by active help, but also in sympathy with the afflicted, and rejoicing with those that rejoice; never annoying others by bringing with him a crowd of attendants to the public baths, or by securing good places at the theatre; never notorious for his offensive luxury and lavishness, but living like the rest of his neighbours in dress and diet, in the bringing up of his children, and the appointments of his wife, as intending to be a man and a citizen on a par with the public about him. He should also be ever ready to give friendly advice and gratuitous advocacy, and offer sympathetic arbitration in differences of man and wife, of friend and friend, spending no small part of the day on the bema or in the market-place, and in all his other life drawing to him, as the south wind does the clouds, wants and trusts from all sides, serving the state with his private thoughts, and not regarding politics, as many do, a troublesome business or tax upon his time, but rather a life's work. By these and all other such means he attracts and attaches to him the public, which contrasts the bastard and spurious fawning and bribing in others with this man's genuine public spirit and character.

His preference for monarchy.

There had been days when such a man would have hoped for absolute sway in his city, nor do Plutarch's tirades against tyrants, copied from the commonplaces of the old dispossessed aristocrats, outweigh his distinct preference for the rule of one man, whose duty it once had been, if he were convinced of his own fitness, to as-

sume the diadem. But now all that a popular politician could gain was the responsibility and burden of expensive honorary duties. In the tract "Upon Exile," a very rhetorical performance, which rather makes a case than expresses a conviction, the main profit of exile is represented as the escape from these duties. "You have no longer a fatherland dragging at you, bothering you, ordering you about; crying: 'Pay taxes, go on an embassy to Rome, entertain the governor, undertake public festivals.'" Of these requirements I fancy the journeys to Rome must have been the most exacting. For though very young men might greatly enjoy a trip to the capital, even with the risks of dying abroad, the envoys sent with formal compliments, in the hope of obtaining real benefits, were more likely to be elderly men; they were not certain to find the emperor at home, and must follow him even to the Pillars of Hercules, or at least through Italy, where the inn-keepers were notorious extortioners; and moreover the waiting in anterooms, the insolence of Roman senators and imperial officials, must have been galling even to an obsequious Greek. We can well imagine how the public at home, who were ready to accord them statues and honorary inscriptions if they succeeded, would treat them if they returned without gaining their object—by far the most likely result.

Exacting duties of Greek envoys to Roman emperors.

Plutarch shows us a greater conservative persistence in the second main department of public life, *religion*—ritual and festivals which were the public relaxation, as contrasted with politics, which were still the pretended business of every Greek polity. On this side of life the information our author gives us is not less explicit, and full of the same inconsistencies. It will be understood that for the present I shall omit all account of philoso-

Plutarch's picture of persistence in Greek religion.

phy as a school of morals, a very notable part of Greek religion in one sense, but wholly dissociated from the traditional rites and ceremonies, and the traditional theologies of the people. It is the general effect as regards public worship in the temples and at oracles, and at the established festivals, which I seek now to derive from Plutarch. Nor is the task very easy from a man of compromises, who desires to adopt reforms and yet retain the old courses, who would be a philosopher and yet a defender of tradition. I think his real attitude is best to be gathered from the following very noble passage:

His attitude to public worship.

> For the Deity is not a thing without soul or spirit under the hand of man [he has just been censuring the use of the word *Demeter* for wheat, and of *Dionysus* for wine], but of such material gifts have we considered the gods to be the givers who grant them to us continuously and adequately—the gods who differ not one from the other, as barbarian and Greek, as of the south or of the north; but if the sun and the moon, and heaven, earth, and sea, are the same to all, though they be called by different names, so for the One Reason that sets all these things in order, and the One Providence that controls them, and for the subordinate forces that direct each several department, various honours and titles have been established by law among divers nations, and men use hallowed symbols, here obscure, there clearer, which lead our thoughts to God, not without risk of failure; for some have slipped altogether from the path, and fallen into superstition, while others avoiding the slough of superstition have gone over the precipice of atheism.

His theory of the unity of Egyptian and Greek religions.

He tries to show in myriad instances that the rituals of Egyptians and Greeks were the same in idea; and as regards the myths he has recourse to either of the explanatory processes which he strongly deprecates when their consequences are carried out boldly—rationalism and allegory. The former was the Epicurean, the latter the Stoic device, adopted of course by other schools in

their turn. Plutarch will only adopt them when they suit his convenience, and supplements them with another "theory of evasion," which made a great noise in the early Christian controversies. I mean his doctrine of demons, or beings intermediate between man and God, who are both beneficent and maleficent, in fact both angels and devils, and to whom are to be attributed all the polytheistic vagaries of popular mythology. The so-called immoralities of the gods, so great a stumbling-block to every sober critic, were all to be referred to the maleficent demons.

Demon theory.

Use of the demon theory.

There is much that is reasonable, much that is eloquent, in this theory; and yet what is more singular, what more melancholy, than to see the sage clinging to the sinking ship, or rather trying to stop the leak and declare her seaworthy, while in his own country, as well as through the Hellenistic East, there had lately been preached a new faith which he never took pains to understand? He can tell us how the Jewish high priest was clothed, but as to even Jewish dogmas he manifests the grossest ignorance. His collection of the *placita* of philosophers is superficial and jejune; his studies in comparative religion, though his theory asserted the equal dignity and veracity of all religions, are even more superficial and careless. He professed himself a cosmopolitan thinker; he was really a narrow and bigoted Hellene; as narrow and exclusive as the old opponents of Alexander had been in their day. This ingrained bigotry was the real secret of the decay and downfall of Greece. While the Asiatic cities had learned at least something from contact with the East, Greece had remained behind, had become poor and depopulated, stagnant in thought as well as in active life. There is no more signal instance of this stagnation than

Plutarch a narrow Hellene.

the sayings and counsels of Plutarch on politics and on religion.

Stagnation in Greek art.

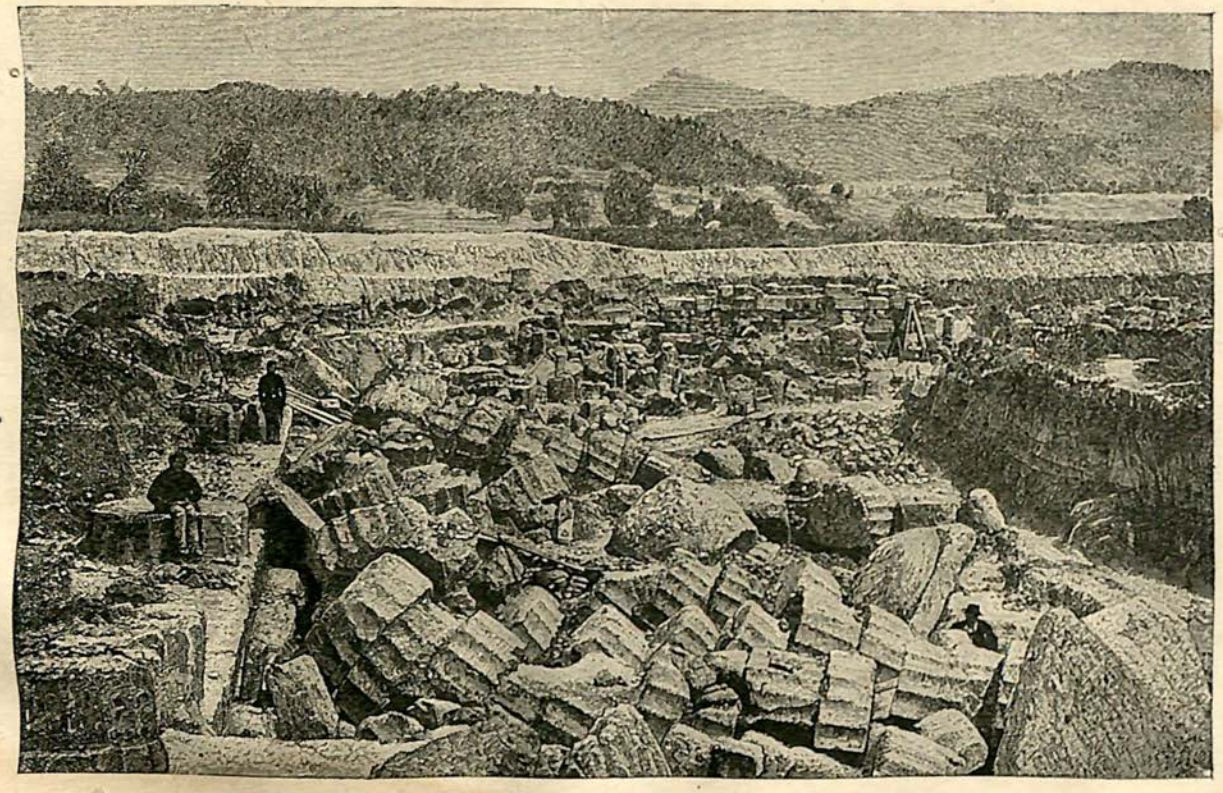
The same may be said of his utterances on art. No new production of any merit is mentioned; old statues, old temples, old pictures were still prized. People went to be shown round Delphi by chattering cicerones; they frequented picture galleries; they admired the bloom on ancient bronzes; they praised the splendour of Homer or Pindar, the music of the ancients, which was no longer understood. On these things Plutarch copies Plato or Aristoxenus. But though statues were set up in crowds to benefactors of their several cities, we hear that these monuments of liberality were kept in stock, often without the heads, which were added when the dedication was ascertained and the statue bought; and even this was more tolerable than the practice of erasing old dedications and renaming the effigies of ancient gods and heroes.

Plutarch's "table-talk."

In addition to his tracts on these serious topics Plutarch has left us many discussions upon the every-day society which he loved and which he sought to improve; he is very full and suggestive on the art of conversation, though the topics he selects as suitable for a dinner-table are certainly not those which we should choose.* He gives directions concerning the choice and number of the company, the question of precedence at table, the use of wit and satire in repartee, the ostentation of some, the meanness of others, and a host of other like topics which I have discussed in another work.† These things are not worth repeating here except with the de-

* The habit of recitations in Greek had lately (he says) come into fashion at Rome, in his own day, and he discusses ("Symposium" VII., 8) what authors are fit for this purpose. He protests against Plato's dialogues being paraded at a dinner-table, but says elsewhere (*ibid. quæstiones* 5, 4) that Euripides, Pindar, and Menander, especially the last, are more suitable.

† "The Greek World under Roman Sway."



OLYMPIA AFTER EXCAVATIONS. From Bötticher's "Olympia."

tails which give them freshness and interest. Here and there we come upon some admission or some compromise regarding morality which shocks us not a little in the midst of much that is lofty, much that is wise. On the question of charity he says and thinks things which, taken by themselves, would make us rank him on no very high level among the world's great moralists.

Unpleasant picture of Greek society in Plutarch.

But in other respects also the society of Greece does not appear to us in very fair colours, even through this most favourable medium. I repudiate, indeed, altogether the picture drawn by Hertzberg in his history of the shocking features taken from the novels of the day—features rendered impossible by the virtues which he extracts from Plutarch's and Dio's society. This random setting down of every narrative now extant as equally good evidence is a proceeding only saved from ridicule by the great learning and earnestness of the writer.

Plutarch's vanity.

But making all due reservations, there is something vain and self-conscious, not only in the general complexion of the social meetings which Plutarch so carefully describes ; there is even some of it in the old man himself, who is evidently proud of his position, his virtues, his reputation, and though he often alludes to the follies, the loquacity, the conceit of old age, affords in his own person a specimen, though perhaps a very lovable one, of all these imperfections. There is to me in this, as in every other phase of Greek life which I have studied, a certain want, an absence of the calmness and dignity which we require in the perfect gentleman. Aristotle's disagreeable *grand seigneur*, who ever stands upon his dignity, is as far removed from our ideal as is Plutarch, with his garrulous unreserve. Nor do I imagine that the domestic arrangements of the Greek houses, even the most wealthy, ever attained the real

cleanliness which we consider the essence of refinement. The prying man, he tells us, is to avoid looking in at open doors, "For it is not right or fair to the owners, nor is the result pleasant. Within, ill-favoured sights meet the stranger's eye, pots and pans lying in disorder, and women-slaves sitting about, and nothing fine or delightful." It was well if you did not hear the lash, or the outcry of the slaves being punished, or maids upon the rack; an ominous passage, for he couples it with the untidinesses to be witnessed about the home of a dissolute man, the ground wet with wine, and the fragments of garlands lying about. No doubt our superior notions regarding these matters are due to the influence of the women of the house.

Lack of cleanliness and order in Greek housekeeping.

And yet it is plain that in this age the mistress of the house had at last obtained some of her rights. It was probably in imitation of what they saw in Rome that the richer people in Bœotia and Attica adopted the freer treatment of the sex, which they had long noticed, but not copied at Sparta. Plutarch's wife paid visits and received guests, even when her husband was absent, sat at table with him, and joined in all his public interests. But nevertheless his "Conjugal Precepts" make it plain that he regarded all this as a mere concession or toleration on the part of the husband, to which the wife had no claim in the nature of things, just as he enjoins kindness and mercy to slaves, without for one moment disallowing slavery. In fact, the age was mending its manners little by little, by gradual improvement and gentler habits, just as its moralist is always exhorting the individual to combat his vices by daily resolves and small advances. Such a course of moral hygiene is rational, but has never been really effectual. It requires a new dogma, a great revelation, a startling reform

Freer life of Greek women at this period.

Plutarch's "Conjugal Precepts."

to carry with it the weak and wavering masses of mankind, who have not the strength or the patience to work out their own salvation.

Dio's and Plutarch's ignorance of Christianity and of Judæism.

Even now "the Word had been made flesh, and dwelt among them, full of grace and truth"; even now the Gospel had been preached in Syria, in "all Asia," in Macedonia, in Corinth; and yet the great contemporaries, Dio, Plutarch, nay, even Josephus, seem hardly to have heard of it. Had Plutarch been at Athens when St. Paul came there, he would have been the first to give the apostle a respectful hearing, as he himself preached the real identity of all religions, the spirituality and unity of the Deity, and the right of all nations to name inferior gods or demons in accordance with their various traditions. But no; as Judæism was unknown to him beyond the vestments of the high priest, so Christianity, first identified everywhere as a Jewish schism, was still beyond his ken.

Pliny's recognition of the spread of Christianity in the first century.

It is not till the first century has actually closed that Pliny is startled to find in Bithynia the temples deserted, the altars forgotten, and a new religion overrunning the province. Even then we may assume that Christianity was very little known in Greece beyond Corinth, and in all the Macedonian towns only among Jews and people of the poorest class. For the severance of Greece and Asia Minor is not less remarkable at this time than their respective unity under Roman rule. I have spoken of this already as regards the Greece of Plutarch. But even he stands aloof completely from the Hellenism of Asia Minor, and there is but one brief tract (and is it genuine?) which represents the writer as residing in the turmoil and confusion of the principal assize town of the province—Ephesus or Pergamum—which he describes as a scene of passion and of misery. So Dio on his side

speaks with a sort of complacency of the decay and disgrace of Athens, and of its vulgar and base imitations of Roman vices, as if the jealous Asiatic Hellenist felt that although the wealth and prosperity of the Asiatic towns were now vastly superior, there was still a primacy of sentiment about the name of Athens and of Greece which no *stoas* or *exedras* or liberalities from emperors and rich citizens could supply.

Asiatic jealousy of Athens.

POSTSCRIPT.

I have now endeavoured according to my ability to give a general view of the great subject entrusted to me in this book. Had I attempted to touch upon even a tithe of the many topics that crowded upon me from the literature in which I have spent my life, the book would have been a mere kaleidoscope of colours, and would have left no permanent impression. It was imperative, therefore, to make a selection; and in so doing I have been led by my own fancy, by the preference with which my own mind, without any suggestion from books, brought up one topic and neglected the others. Whether this was a safe guide is of course doubtful; every one has his prepossessions, and they may not be agreeable to other men, who desire a methodical survey, and who may complain that many a topic of great importance has been perhaps omitted, perhaps slightly mentioned. If any are so disposed I sincerely trust they will take up the subject afresh, and treat it with special regard to my omissions. There is more than enough room for many other independent books on the same great and fascinating subject. It is hard, however, to imagine any of them attractive unless it bears the individual stamp of its author; the idiosyncrasies, it may be, of his mind; the peculiarities of his conception of Greek life. I will not deny that in many respects mine differ widely from that of other men, whose authority and fame are far greater in the philological world. What better, even in the face of this danger,

can a man do, than go straight to the sources, and having studied them for himself, reproduce his impressions honestly, decidedly, plainly, avoiding the extremes of dogmatism and of self-depreciation? The latter is indeed often the cloak for mere vanity, and brooks no contradiction even of an opinion put forward under the garb of a tentative theory. Provided a writer who has shown proof of research labels each new opinion as his own, and not as an accepted truth, there can be no complaint that he is passing off paradoxes or individual fancies as historic truths. So far the personal element in his writing is necessary as a caution to the reader.

It is a matter of frequent remark that no impersonal history is ever striking or suggestive; it is far better to learn from the prejudiced and partial thinkers who maintain opposite sides of a question, than from the judicial mind that calmly sums up the arguments of both. Even a nation seems to progress more rapidly under government by party than under a committee of the best men chosen from all shades of opinion.

These are the excuses I have to make for writing this personal and partial book, wherein are stated many subjective views, and wherein many judgments current among Greek scholars are ignored or silently controverted. The reader will find in my earlier and more expanded works on the same subject the reasons which have persuaded me in each case. But in most instances it was not requisite to give references; my American readers, who have long befriended me and given an ear to what I say, will either take my word for it that I have thought out seriously what is put forward, or they will already know where to find the fuller arguments which support my conclusions. This much is certain: the longer any one studies Greek letters and Greek art, the

more deeply will he convince himself that no modern thinker can satisfy himself (not to say his readers) in any attempt to reproduce the impression which grows upon him. Learned men in Germany have written great books of detail on each department in which the Greeks excelled. Have their weighty tomes, bristling with references, made the great problem easier? French and English men have written brief essays and lively sketches concerning it. Have they satisfied the earnest inquirer? I have no hope of being able to steer between the Scylla and the Charybdis of this criticism.

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